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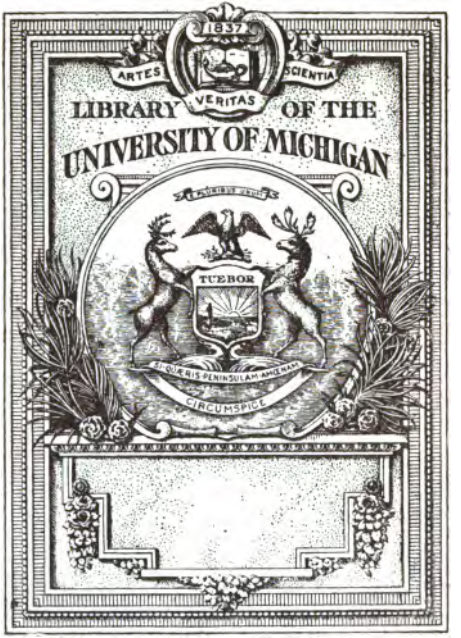
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THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

LA SAISIAZ

DRAMATIC IDYLS — JOCOSERIA

THE LION GATE. MYCENE.

"She, the two-footed lioness that sleeps with
The wolf, in absence of the generous lion,
Kills me the unhappy one."

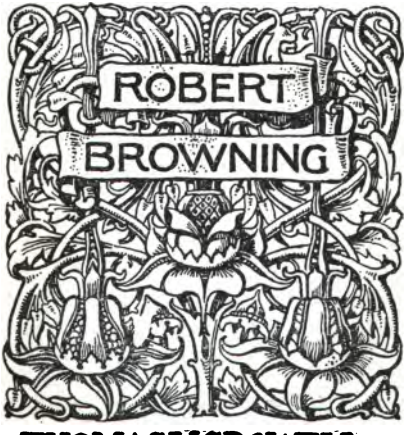
THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

THE AGAMEMNON OF AESCHYLUS

LA SAISIAZ

DRAMATIC IDYLS

JOCOSERIA



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COMPANY··NEW~YORK

THE AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS

LA SAISIAZ

DRAMATIC IDYLS—JOCOSERIA

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

From the Author's Revised Text

Edited with Introductions and Notes by

CHARLOTTE PORTER AND HELEN A. CLARKE

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INTRODUCTION.

AMONG Carlyle's many services to the world, an indirect one of considerable literary value was his mandate to Browning that he be the English poet to give the English peoples a really Æschylean version of the "Agamemnon."

Since Elizabeth Barrett Browning had translated the "Prometheus" of Æschylus, it was the happier chance that Robert Browning should have been led to companion that drama of gods and demigods in cloud-land with the play peculiarly suited to his mass and vigor of touch, the more humanly heroic "Agamemnon."

Shortly after Elizabeth Browning's death, her husband, as if to fulfil the prevision of his after life given in "By the Fireside," turned with fresh assiduity toward the Greek reading, of which she had been especially fond, and in which her scholarship was that of an expert. It was in 1862, the next year after her death, that he wrote of his son's boyish delight in his holidays and of his own "great read at Euripides." "There he is at it, deep in Greek," the young Browning actually whispered, then, no doubt, just as his father's "By the Fireside" had foretold. At last, in life's November, Browning's Attic period dawned in good earnest, and Landor's desire of long before came true. "You are right

about Browning," he wrote Forster in 1840. "He has sent me some admirable things. I only wish he would Atticize a little. Few of the Athenians had such a quarry on their property, but they constructed better roads for the conveyance of material." Without abandoning his own original pathfinding or leaving unworked the unusual quarry on his own property, Browning made himself far more familiar with the Greek knack of road-construction as evinced in the domain of the drama than most English poets who have painfully sought all their lives to enrich their art-expression with the Hellenic secret. As readers of the transcripts from Euripides have reason to know, Browning's study of Euripides involved a plunge to the depths of other Greek dramatists.

A sympathetic reconstruction of Greek life and a vivid apprehension of it as a fluent and lively human product, instead of a museum-labelled specimen, was the outcome. The Gothic poet found out all the Gothic possibilities there were in Hellenism. In the serener beauty of the style of Sophocles taken arbitrarily as the type of all Greek art, the marked individualities in genius of his compeers were wont to be overwhelmed. In Browning's Greek poems distinct characterizations of Euripides and Aristophanes emerged. Six years later than his last work on Euripides, at sixty-five, in "life's November," indeed, came this translation of Æschylus, and in this the Father of Greek Tragedy also peered out in his grand native roughness through the alien veils of smoothness belonging to the Sophoclean Greek type. Although no word of comment helps the portrayal, the rugged sincerity of the version suffices to reveal him. The innuendo-pregnant dialogue is accompanied, moreover, by an honest attempt

to mirror the uneven strophes of the chorus of Æschylus.

The same difficulties that beset the appreciation of the original belong to this translation; but already many readers will prefer to any other smoother English metrical version a translation rigorously faithful "without amplification or embellishment," in "as Greek a fashion as English will bear," to every turn of phrase in the original. That there will be many more to treasure so uncompromising a translation in the future, the signs of the times tend to witness.

Of the second piece in this volume, "La Saisiaz," it may be said that since the digression in the third book of "Sordello," so direct an utterance of the poet to his general public has not been made. The subject, too, upon which he disburdens himself in his own person, is no slight one. Many of his readers will think it, doubtless, the most important one upon which he could speak to them face to face. "Does the soul survive the body? Is there God's self, no or yes?" These are the questions he proposes to ask and have an answer from himself, — "with no favor, with no fear," in "La Saisiaz," — How much, how little, do *I* inwardly believe that the soul's eclipse is not the soul's extinction?

The occasion upon which he is led to search his own mind thus frankly was a personal event — the sudden death of his almost life-long friend, Anne Egerton Smith. This he explains fully and openly, in his own person, at the beginning of the poem; and the cogitations the shock awakened in him are also given, with no vestige of the dramatic maskings and enrobings that elsewhere protect him from crude inferences. Here, at any rate, his readers find Browning

himself in a confiding mood; and what is it he tells them of the ground of his hope? Clearly that he, for his part, puts no reliance upon external revelation. At the outset he determines to forbear the self-deception implied in putting an answer in God's mouth. He refrains from passing off "human lisp as echo of the sphere-song out of reach." In this his manner and trend differ markedly from his brother-poet's point of view and general conclusion in "In Memoriam." To the sphere-song Tennyson as naturally and characteristically refers as Browning to the soul-whisper, to human weakness. It can only question weakness — itself, that is — and answer weakly, he admits, but not weakly ask. In that intensive human asking Browning centres the argument which Tennyson is more prone to hurl outward upon the diffusive power of the "rolling air." So, in the bare fact that a man need not weakly ask, but stoutly confront both his own weakness and the unsounded cosmos, the argument of "La Saisiaz" begins, and, after a vain attempt for a wider platform upon which to base his faith in immortality, there, also, it ends. With external revelation abjured or held in abeyance, internal revelation of his undying human soul's essence is confessed to constitute, for his part, the sole ground of his buoyant confidence in soul and God. The long argument, where Reason successively beats down Fancy's comfortable suppositions, as suppositions in which no real comfort can be taken, reaches this net result. All that it goes to prove, in a word, being that merely a confident hope in immortality, and not an absolute assurance of it, educes from man the best results in life and character. Further than this, all that the poet considers directly proved as to immortality as a fact is

neither negation nor affirmation, but an open question. Two facts, self-assumed, impossible to prove or disprove, and therefore impossible not to assume, a self and an out-self, one called Soul, the other God, are the only facts Reason cannot gainsay. What alone, then, he does conclude is the spiritual desirableness for each man to cherish within himself the purpose in living which makes life worth while.

This summing up the poet calls sad but hopeful. Then a second part of the poem follows. In it his yearning to give other men who need it the advantage of the exuberant faith in that purpose in life supplied by trust in immortality, whose unprovableness he for his part so cheerfully accepts, finds a highly poetic and symbolic outlet. Unwilling to fool their reason; aware that there is no way to bridge the gap between one man's conviction and another's, and that each one must for himself alone solve this problem of the soul and its God; he yet desires to impregnate their hearts with his own spiritual good cheer. To this end he wishes for himself the genius and the magnetism of the variously gifted men whose lives, as it happens, have been associated with the neighborhood of "La Saisiaz," so that the fervor of his own hope might burn aloft with the convincing flame of all their combined gifts and persuasive mesmerism to light up the pathway of the hopeless millions of men amenable to such influence, and bring them beacon-news, through the larger outlook he has, of the far country of the eternal human soul.

More than a year before "La Saisiaz" was written, Browning wished it were true that he had "so much of 'genius' as to permit the testimony of an especially privileged insight to come in aid of the ordinary argu

ment" for immortality. Without even so much of a manifestation of superiority as inspires Whitman's conception of the office of the Poet as "Answerer," Browning has in "La Saisiaz" expressed his brotherly longing to be able to fill that position, but only for the sake of heartening the weaker brothers, without either deluding the reason of the stronger ones, who were not disposed to take "flare for evidence," or giving his own stanch hope any finer name than it deserves. Yet he did not underrate the prerogative of genius, — insight. When so modestly replying in the letter just cited, and quoted in full in the notes in this volume, to the correspondent who had thanked him for invigorating her faith, he added that he had himself "been aware of the communication of something more subtle than a ratiocinative process when the convictions of 'genius' thrilled" his soul to its depths. It may be suspected that he quietly put his correspondent's encouragement — probably received through reading poems more dramatic than "La Saisiaz" — on a different basis than that she supposed it to have, — a basis less rational but more potential. The drift of "La Saisiaz," at any rate, places the soul's assurance of its mission during this life and an unknown future on its own strength, with a dispassionate calm that satisfies the reason, and with an intuitional ardor fitted to educe each man's human best of aspiration and of joy.

Finally, in the concluding lines, the poet gives his readers an intimation still more confidential and personal, in the reference he makes to other hours of travail in the face of death, when his grief was fiercer and his faith harder tested. Those sufferings are sacred. Of them and the spiritual fruit wrested from

them he gives the only glimpse he can offer through the glass of this slighter sorrow.

By some mystery of metrical handling, the verse of "La Saisiaz" gives a much easier and less heated impression of its speaker than the similar verse of "Locksley Hall." The skimming lilt of the long eight-stressed line with its facile couplet rhymes, so serious in effect in Tennyson, seems here, in Browning, too light, at first hearing, for the grave theme. Yet it gives a sense of sustained control of a chain of thought little burdening the speaker. The reverie smoothly covers more poignant reminiscences; yet by the time the torch metaphor is reached, the long line pulses with nervous force.

The first series of the "Dramatic Idyls" did not immediately follow "La Saisiaz," the "Two Poets of Croisic" intervening chronologically. Yet once it has been noticed that death is faced in each one of these idyls, it may be questioned whether in conception at least they did not directly follow. Every one of these idyls faces death in some shape, but always at a moment of crisis intense with vigor and passion. Never in all Browning's robust life-loving work is there a creative moment more instinct with blood and breath than that of these idyls, published in his sixty-seventh year. They are all poems of the people, realistic of speech and scene, true to their title. Three of them are notably English, "Ned Bratts" especially is rank with the flavor of the yeomanry of the soil. The pristine Elizabethan heartiness survives in this, if in no other modern poem. The fun and burlesque of this story of two sinners to be converted into saints for the eternal enjoyment of heaven by the hanging which is their due, is so broad and farcical that it

ought to redeem Browning forever from the reproach of "metaphysical poet," too long forcing his genius into a strait-jacket it never really wore. As an English religious extravaganza, George Meredith's "Jump-to-Glory Jane" may be in the running with this brace of Bunyanite converts, roaring Ned Bratts and his big wife, Tab; but Hogarth and Dickens are the portrayers of the characteristically clownish with whom Browning's picture of that daft, sweating court scene best stands comparison. The diction of "Ned Bratts" is saturated with stout old Anglo-Saxon words, and broidered with quaint Bunyanisms, and the grossness of the reeking theme is made grotesquely beautiful and artistically effective by the anxious simplicity and sincerity with which the sinner-saints save themselves from the seductive perils of sinning in life by being "happily hanged."

"Halbert and Hob," a story of brutal heredity and the spark of pity struck out in the flinty hearts by the sudden mystical brush of death against them, is equally elemental, sterner in outline than the florid "Ned Bratts," but in its briefer, harder way, scarcely less pictorial. Metrically it is built on the same appropriately simple plan, a six-stressed line with couplet rhymes, full of muscular one-syllabled English.

The same strong couplet rhymes and explicit diction are used in the third English idyl, "Martin Relph;" but the line is longer, and the extra seventh stress seems to give the weak whine befitting the old man's confession. In this fine bit of thrilling story-telling, Martin's remorse and self-accusation are the ennobling traits. They are vitiated by a piteous but enfeebling sneakiness. He is half willing to appear convinced and to convince others who are charitably in-

clined that his lack of moral soundness was only superficially exposed at the crucial instant of which he tells, when death menaced the woman he secretly coveted, and that his moral failure then was trifling. That which he keeps almost back will not be quite kept back! It throws its sinister shadow over every half-revelation, and the result is a matchless character-sketch of self-betrayal. In this, as in "Ned Bratts," there is a lively background in which a few subsidiary characters are modelled with relief enough to be vivid without detracting from the central interest. The blustering bulgy-nosed Captain, authoritatively reading the peasantry its lesson of non-interference in matters of state, while, scared, huddled together on the hill-tops, these villagers await the punishment his redcoats are about to mete out to the quiet girl waiting there with pinioned arms and bandaged eyes; the frantic man, waving his white paper, unseen save by Martin Relph, stumblingly, staggeringly making his ineffectual progress at the foot of the hill like a person in a nightmare, — such pictures as these, inside the main picture, bear witness to the vitality of Browning's imaginative eyesight at sixty-seven.

A folk-picture as true to Russian peasant life as these English poems are to the yeoman heart of the poet's native land is painted in "Ivàn Ivànovitch." There is an added effectiveness in the description of the dreary white landscape and black pine tracts cropping out above the snow; and there is a realism almost painful, if it were not artistically so skilful, in the fleshly force of such bits, for example, as the feel of the fang of the wolf grinding the woman's shoulder, or the look of the blood-snake winding from her beheaded trunk to a hiding-place among the splinter-heaps. As in the pre-

ceding poems, so in this, the presence of death pierces the plausibilities of life, and reveals Loùscha's weakness. Each time the "Satan-face" of the wolf overtook her sledge, she found herself incapable of the heroism the crudest humanity ruthlessly demands of all women who are mothers. As Mr. Symons has said, "Nothing could be more graphic and exciting than the description of the approach of the wolves: the effective change from iambs to anapæsts gives their very motion."

> "Was that — wind?
> . . . . . .
> Only the wind: yet, no — our breath goes up too straight!
> Still the low sound, — less low, loud, louder, at a rate
> There's no mistaking more! Shall I lean out — look — learn
> The truth whatever it be? Pad, pad! At last, I turn —
>
> "'T is the regular pad of the wolves in pursuit of the life in the sledge!
> An army they are: close-packed they press like the thrust of a wedge," etc.

And it is equally true that nothing could be more graphic and exciting than the description of Loùscha's successive inward yieldings to the will of the green-brass eyes and nuzzling snout of the ravening wolves, her successive relapses into relief as, each child gone, she turns onward with new zest to the life and hope perchance still left her. Martin Relph's audience, in its tender treatment of his reluctant self-accusations and its indulgent humoring of his murderous impulse by calling it fright, or cowardliness, or possibly self-defence, — since it might have cost him his life to do what he failed to do, — contrasts strongly with the prompt-judging Ivàn, whose axe so confidently decreed poor Loùscha's sentence. Is it possible that the peasant crowd and the village dignitaries at the church step,

who were so sure of God's will and Ivàn's enactment of it, and who found a mother's love of life so monstrous, would have listened leniently to a Russian Martin? The old priest's rejoinder to the Pomeschik's interposition against Ivàn's lynch law seems to imply that Browning was aware that any Martin would fare better than any Loùscha.

Yet what doubt is there that the death of the suspected girl was due as clearly to Martin's instinctive hesitation for no reason at all but because of envy and native selfishness, as the wolves' seizure of Loùscha's children was the result of her instinctive hesitation to sacrifice herself for them because of her sensuousness and native love of life?

Browning has not forgotten to push his contrasts in different ways of meeting death into unwonted regions, and to suggest quite new and striking inconsistencies in the common conception of what altruism is. The spontaneous heroism of the dog who saved the drowning child and her doll while a lot of unconcerned bystanders looked on, in the clever little poem "Tray," supplies some cynical comparisons at the expense of the human beings who unfalteringly award indulgence, condemnation, praise for selfishness or self-sacrifice.

So throughout these idyls the sentence of death or of release often tries the temper of the judge quite as much as the imminence of death tried the person who was judged. And while each of these idyls is interesting enough taken separately, if they be considered all together, as a related group, they yield further matter for the exercise of fine distinctions cleaving to the very marrow of life.

The story of Pheidippides, the Greek runner, — whose patriotic service for his beloved Athens seems

not less glorious, through the poet's celebration of it, than that of Marathon's general, Miltiades, — presents both the hero and his country in a wrestle with death which elicits their hidden virtue. The crisis for Athens, when she seems to face utter extinction beneath the armed heel of Persia, involves a crisis of another sort for Sparta. The threat of Athens' death as Pheidippides makes it known to her Greek neighbor brings out her disposition unmistakably —

"O my Athens! — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate! "

The especial gift of vivid seeing with which these idyls dower the reader is as magical in this Greek poem as in the English and the Russian pieces. "Majestical Pan," the great earth-god, in his cool rock cleft, is the right deity to preside over all these lusty folk-pictures. He strikes upon the retina of the modern English eye, through Browning's picture of him in Pheidippides, with a reality that reconstructs and reinterprets the crude kernel of eternal truth in the antique myth.

The metrical originality of "Pheidippides" is as notable as the force of conception shown in it. The measure is a mixture of dactyls and spondees, with a pause at the end of each line, reflecting the firm-set eager purpose of the patriotic Greek runner and the breath-obstructed rhythm of his swift bounding flight.

In the second series of the "Dramatic Idyls," published in the next year, there is a like vividness, passing gradually into greater complexity. "Echetlos" only has the yeomanlike muscle of the first series. If, looking to see what common bond unites this group,

it be detected that all these pieces turn on Fame or common opinion of some sort, just as the earlier series circled about Death, it will be easy to see why so much less individualized a motive must involve greater social complexities in scene-setting and general drift.

In "Echetlos" the antithesis between the unfamed deeds of the "Holder of the Ploughshare" and the ignominious action of the great leaders, Miltiades and Themistocles, is obvious.

In "Clive" there is greater complexity; but it is still evident that a similar contrast is drawn between the universal acclaim of the dauntless man who gave England India and the secret cowardice within him that made him swerve from facing the gnawing, insidious difficulties of living out his life.

"Muléykeh," imbued with the picturesque life of the sons of Arabia, implies a contrast between mere ordinary pride in the possession of the famous Muléykeh, the Pearl of the Desert, who was never outstripped, and the unique love of her true owner, Hóseyn, who forbore to cloud with any falsity the genuine pre-eminence of his matchless mare.

"Pietro of Abano" is the subtlest of all these idyls; and in its social satire of leadership according to Platonic thinkers and fame according to the unthinking world, it is intricate enough to afford food for long ruminations. But like all the other idyls it is ever graphic and never didactic, for all its ingenious implications. It contrasts the ill-fame and real ability of the mediæval magician, maligned by all the dull wits of his time, with the empty pretensions and solid deceit of the young Greek parasite. This trickster, who maps out a career of most successful seeming for himself, catching the applause of all the world, and

usurping every reward of the despised Peter, out of whose brain his whole celebrity has shamelessly grown, is, at last, represented as waking from the toils his own wiles have spun by the help of Peter's magical powder, to know the difference between the real and the specious in the service of mankind.

The two remaining idyls deal lightly — the first dryly and whimsically, the second poetically and gracefully — with two matters of equivocal repute bearing upon women. In the nrst, "Doctor ——," the time-honored abuse of wifehood crystallized in the Talmudic version of the old proverb, is illustrated in a humorous tale of the career of the devil's son as a physician. The outcome of the whole, read between the lines of course, seems to be that this bad fame of woman, imputing her strength to her as a reproach, is susceptible of a reverse aspect, making it an advantage to her; for does it not give her a handle over the devil himself?

The purity of Luna's love for Pan, despite the impure look it wears in the gossiping old legend, is touched upon with the airiest of pencils. Like the vision of moon-lit, moon-lost cloud it summons up, it is a subject for fleeting discernment as to the inner meaning lurking in an old myth. That myth is as appropriately associated with this second series of idyls, penetrating the inner worth of equivocal opinions, as the Pan of "Pheidippides" is suited to the vivid robustness of the first series.

The poet's picturesque story-telling ability had free and vigorous play in these idyls; freer, perhaps, since without admixture of involved dialogue *pro* and *con*, probing and testing appearance, than in any other continuous portion of his work.

In "Jocoseria" much of the same sort of alert easy-going workmanship appears. It seems done almost off-hand, like the dexterous thrusts of a wise but playful giant whose art appears careless because it is so familiar a practice. The keen satire, the humor that stings human foibles, and the kindliness that thoroughly understands what it desires to better, and takes no shallow view of human virtue, are the characteristics of this period closing with "Jocoseria." During all of it a new access of pictorialness seems to have invigorated and freshly anointed Browning's dramatic powers. "Solomon and Balkis," and "Adam, Lilith, and Eve," reveal this easy forcibleness in a sportive light. His mockery in "Jocoseria," however, always has meaning. When it grows weighty with its burden of inward significance, it has as serious an ending as "Jochanan Hakkadosh." When it grows hot with indignation over a light judgment or a treacherous act, it ends with as palpable a cut as in "Donald," at the claim of the sportsman to valor, or with as fierce a retribution as Cristina is dramatically made to award her favored Monaldeschi in the historic gallery at Fontainebleau.

The lyrical beauty of "Never the Time and the Place," or the depth and splendor and power of "Ixion," or the spiritual insight of "Jochanan Hakkadosh" are all qualities as noticeably belonging to Browning's earlier work as to the ripe fruitage of this period. In "Jochanan," especially, the philosophically religious Browning of "The Death in the Desert" is revived, though under a different aspect. With Semitic sensuousness now, instead of the idealism more peculiarly Christian, he reveals the happy unity of life, when all phases of experience are re-

garded, as by his St. John in the Desert all phases of belief were regarded, as a continuously enlightening process.

At the close of "Jocoseria," in the epilogue poem called "Pambo," Browning leaves the stage with a laugh. Playing with his critics good-humoredly enough, he yet gives them, in jest, the home-hit that he has found their early criticism worth as much to him as the professor's exposition of his text was to Pambo. He can reform his expression only by expressing himself, and when he does so, he discovers that his faults and excellences are alike the outcome of his quality.

Whatever fresh flare of the poetic flame may be hailed in this pictorial period of Browning's development, or whatever proficiency and ease of touch distinguish it, they must be recognized, in the light of his life-long devotion to his chosen art, as but the legitimate outgrowth of his original gift.

CHARLOTTE PORTER.
HELEN A. CLARKE.

THE

AGAMEMNON OF ÆSCHYLUS.

1877.

MAY I be permitted to chat a little, by way of recreation, at the end of a somewhat toilsome and perhaps fruitless adventure?

If, because of the immense fame of the following Tragedy, I wished to acquaint myself with it, and could only do so by the help of a translator, I should require him to be literal at every cost save that of absolute violence to our language. The use of certain allowable constructions which, happening to be out of daily favor, are all the more appropriate to archaic workmanship, is no violence: but I would be tolerant for once, — in the case of so immensely famous an original, — of even a clumsy attempt to furnish me with the very turn of each phrase in as Greek a fashion as English will bear: while, with respect to amplifications and embellishments, — anything rather than, with the good farmer, experience that most signal of mortifications, "to gape for Æschylus and get Theognis." I should especially decline, — what may appear to brighten up a passage, — the employment of a new word for some old one — πόνος, or μέγας, or τέλος, with its congeners, recurring four times in three lines: for though such substitution may be in itself perfectly justifiable, yet this exercise of ingenuity ought to be within the competence of the unaided English reader if he likes to show himself ingenious. Learning Greek teaches Greek, and nothing else: certainly not common sense, if that have failed to precede the teaching. Further, — if I obtained a mere strict bald version of thing by thing,

or at least word pregnant with thing, I should hardly look for an impossible transmission of the reputed magniloquence and sonority of the Greek; and this with the less regret, inasmuch as there is abundant musicality elsewhere, but nowhere else than in his poem the ideas of the poet. And lastly, when presented with these ideas, I should expect the result to prove very hard reading indeed if it were meant to resemble Æschylus, *ξυμβαλεῖν οὐ ῥᾴδιος*, "not easy to understand," in the opinion of his stoutest advocate among the ancients; while, I suppose, even modern scholarship sympathizes with that early declaration of the redoubtable Salmasius, when, looking about for an example of the truly obscure for the benefit of those who found obscurity in the sacred books, he protested that this particular play leaves them all behind in this respect, with their "Hebraisms, Syriasms, Hellenisms, and the whole of such bag and baggage" [1] For, over and above the purposed ambiguity of the Chorus, the text is sadly corrupt, probably interpolated, and certainly mutilated; and no unlearned person enjoys the scholar's privilege of trying his fancy upon each obstacle whenever he comes to a stoppage, and effectually clearing the way by suppressing what seems to lie in it.

All I can say for the present performance is, that I have done as I would be done by, if need were. Should anybody, without need, honor my translation by a comparison with the original, I beg him to observe that, following no editor exclusively, I keep to the earlier readings so long as sense can be made out of them, but disregard, I hope, little of importance in recent criticism so far as I have fallen in with it. Fortunately, the poorest translation, provided only it be faithful, — though

[1] "Quis Æschylum possit affirmare Græce nunc scienti magis patere explicabilem quam Evangelia aut Epistolas Apostolicas? Unus ejus Agamemnon obscuritate superat quantum est librorum sacrorum cum suis Hebraismis et Syriasmis et tota Hellenisticæ supellectili vel farragine." — SALMASIUS *de Hellenistica*, Epist. Dedic.

it reproduce all the artistic confusion of tenses, moods, and persons, with which the original teems, — will not only suffice to display what an eloquent friend maintains to be the all-in-all of poetry — "the action of the piece" — but may help to illustrate his assurance that "the Greeks are the highest models of expression, the unapproached masters of the grand style: their expression is so excellent because it is so admirably kept in its right degree of prominence, because it is so simple and so well subordinated, because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys . . . not a word wasted, not a sentiment capriciously thrown in, stroke on stroke!" [1] So may all happen!

Just a word more on the subject of my spelling — in a transcript from the Greek and there exclusively — Greek names and places precisely as does the Greek author. I began this practice, with great innocency of intention, some six-and-thirty years ago. Leigh Hunt, I remember, was accustomed to speak of his gratitude, wher ignorant of Greek, to those writers (like Goldsmith) who had obliged him by using English characters, so that he might relish, for instance, the smooth quality of such a phrase as "hapalunetai galené;" he said also that Shelley was indignant at "Firenze" having displaced the Dantesque "Fiorenza," and would contemptuously English the intruder "Firence." I supposed I was doing a simple thing enough: but there has been till lately much astonishment at *os* and *us*, *ai* and *oi*, representing the same letters in Greek. Of a sudden, however, whether in translation or out of it, everybody seems committing the offence, although the adoption of *u* for *v* still presents such difficulty that it is a wonder how we have hitherto escaped "Eyripides." But there existed a sturdy Briton who, Ben Jonson informs us, wrote "The Life of the Emperor Anthony Pie" — whom we now acquiesce in as Antoninus Pius: for

[1] 'Poems' by Matthew Arnold, Preface.

"with time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes satin." Yet there is, on all sides, much profession of respect for what Keats called "vowelled Greek" — "consonanted," one would expect; and, in a criticism upon a late admirable translation of something of my own, it was deplored that, in a certain verse corresponding in measure to the fourteenth of the sixth Pythian Ode, "neither Professor Jebb in his Greek, nor Mr. Browning in his English, could emulate that matchlessly musical *γόνον ἰδὼν κάλλιστον ἀνδρῶν*." Now, undoubtedly, "Seeing her son the fairest of men" has more sense than sound to boast of: but then, would not an Italian roll us out "Rimirando il figliuolo bellissimo degli uomini!" whereat Pindar, no less than Professor Jebb and Mr. Browning, *τριακτῆρος οἴχεται τυχών*.

It is recorded in the annals of Art that there was once upon a time, practising so far north as Stockholm, a painter and picture-cleaner — sire of a less unhappy son — Old Muytens: and the annalist, Baron de Tessé, has not concealed his profound dissatisfaction at Old Muytens' conceit "to have himself had something to do with the work of whatever master of eminence might pass through his hands." Whence it was, — the Baron goes on to deplore, — that much detriment was done to that excellent piece "The Recognition of Achilles," by Rubens, through the perversity of Old Muytens, "who must needs take on him to beautify every nymph of the twenty by the bestowment of a widened eye and an enlarged mouth." I, at least, have left eyes and mouths everywhere as I found them, and this conservatism is all that claims praise for — what is, after all, *ἀκέλευστος ἄμισθος ἀοιδά*. No, neither "uncommanded" nor "unrewarded:" since it was commanded of me by my venerated friend Thomas Carlyle, and rewarded will it indeed become if I am permitted to dignify it by the prefatory insertion of his dear and noble name. R. B.

LONDON: *October 1st*, 1877.

PERSONS.

Warder.
Choros of Old Men.
KLUTAIMNESTRA.
TALTHUBIOS, *Herald.*
AGAMEMNON.
KASSANDRA.
AIGISTHOS.

WARDER.

THE gods I ask deliverance from these labors,
Watch of a year's length whereby, slumbering through it
On the Atreidai's roofs on elbow, — dog-like —
I know of nightly star-groups the assemblage,
And those that bring to men winter and summer
Bright dynasts, as they pride them in the æther
— Stars, when they wither, and the uprisings of them.
And now on ward I wait the torch's token,
The glow of fire, shall bring from Troia message
And word of capture: so prevails audacious
The man's-way-planning hoping heart of woman.
But when I, driven from night-rest, dew-drenched hold to
This couch of mine — not looked upon by visions,
Since fear instead of sleep still stands beside me,
So as that fast I fix in sleep no eyelids —
And when to sing or chirp a tune I fancy,
For slumber such song-remedy infusing,
I wail then, for this House's fortune groaning,
Not, as of old, after the best ways governed.
Now, lucky be deliverance from these labors,
At good news — the appearing dusky fire!
O hail, thou lamp of night, a day-long lightness
Revealing, and of dances the ordainment!

Halloo, halloo !
To Agamemnon's wife I show, by shouting,
That, from bed starting up at once, i' the household
Joyous acclaim, good-omened to this torch-blaze,
She send aloft, if haply Ilion's city
Be taken, as the beacon boasts announcing.
Ay, and, for me, myself will dance a prelude,
For, that my masters' dice drop right, I 'll reckon :
Since thrice-six has it thrown to me, this signal.
Well, may it hap that, as he comes, the loved hand
O' the household's lord I may sustain with this hand !
As for the rest, I 'm mute : on tongue a big ox
Has trodden. Yet this House, if voice it take should,
Most plain would speak. So, willing I myself speak
To those who know : to who know not — I 'm blankness.

CHOROS.

The tenth year this, since Priamos' great match,
King Menelaos, Agamemnon King,
— The strenuous yoke-pair of the Atreidai's honor
Two-throned, two-sceptred, whereof Zeus was donor —
Did from this land the aid, the armament despatch,
The thousand-sailored force of Argives clamoring
" Ares " from out the indignant breast, as fling
Passion forth vultures which, because of grief
Away, — as are their young ones, — with the thief,
Lofty above their brood-nests wheel in ring,
Row round and round with oar of either wing,
Lament the bedded chicks, lost labor that was love :
Which hearing, one above
— Whether Apollon, Pan or Zeus — that wail,
Sharp-piercing bird-shriek of the guests who fare

Housemates with gods in air —
Suchanone sends, against who these assail,
What, late-sent, shall not fail
Of punishing — Erinus. Here as there,
The Guardian of the Guest, Zeus, the excelling one,
Sends against Alexandros either son
Of Atreus: for that wife, the many-husbanded,
Appointing many a tug that tries the limb,
While the knee plays the prop in dust, while, shred
To morsels, lies the spear-shaft; in those grim
Marriage-prolusions when their Fury wed
Danaoi and Troes, both alike. All's said:
Things are where things are, and, as fate has willed,
So shall they be fulfilled.
Not gently-grieving, not just doling out
The drops of expiation — no, nor tears distilled —
Shall he we know of bring the hard about
To soft — that intense ire
At those mock rites unsanctified by fire.
But we pay naught here: through our flesh, age-weighed,
Left out from who gave aid
In that day, — we remain,
Staying on staves a strength
The equal of a child's at length.
For when young marrow in the breast doth reign,
That's the old man's match, — Ares out of place
In either: but in oldest age's case,
Foliage a-fading, why, he wends his way
On three feet, and, no stronger than a child,
Wanders about gone wild,
A dream in day.

But thou, Tundareus' daughter, Klutaimnestra queen,
What need? What new? What having heard or seen,

By what announcement's tidings, everywhere
Settest thou, round about, the sacrifice a-flare?
For, of all gods the city-swaying,
Those supernal, those infernal,
Those of the fields', those of the mart's obeying, —
The altars blaze with gifts;
And here and there, heaven-high the torch uplifts
Flame — medicated with persuasions mild,
With foul admixture unbeguiled —
Of holy unguent, from the clotted chrism
Brought from the palace, safe in its abysm.
Of these things, speaking what may be indeed
Both possible and lawful to concede,
Healer do thou become! — of this solicitude
Which, now, stands plainly forth of evil mood,
And, then . . . but from oblations, hope, to-day
Gracious appearing, wards away
From soul the insatiate care,
The sorrow at my breast, devouring there!
Empowered am I to sing
The omens, what their force which, journeying,
Rejoiced the potentates:
(For still, from God, inflates
My breast song-suasion: age,
Born to the business, still such war can wage)
— How the fierce bird against the Teukris land
Despatched, with spear and executing hand,
The Achaian's two-throned empery — o'er Hellas' youth
Two rulers with one mind:
The birds' king to these kings of ships, on high,
— The black sort, and the sort that 's white behind, —
Appearing by the palace, on the spear-throw side,
In right sky-regions, visible far and wide, —

Devouring a hare-creature, great with young,
Balked of more racings they, as she from whom they sprung!
Ah, Linos, say — ah, Linos, song of wail!
But may the good prevail!

The prudent army-prophet seeing two
The Atreidai, two their tempers, knew
Those feasting on the hare
The armament-conductors were;
And thus he spoke, explaining signs in view.
"In time, this outset takes the town of Priamos:
But all before its towers, — the people's wealth that was,
Of flocks and herds, — as sure, shall booty-sharing thence
Drain to the dregs away, by battle violence.
Only, have care lest grudge of any god disturb
With cloud the unsullied shine of that great force, the curb
Of Troia, struck with damp
Beforehand in the camp!
For envyingly is
The virgin Artemis
Toward — her father's flying hounds — this House —
The sacrificers of the piteous
And cowering beast,
Brood and all, ere the birth: she hates the eagles' feast.
Ah, Linos, say — ah, Linos, song of wail!
But may the good prevail!

"Thus ready is the beauteous one with help
To those small dewdrop-things fierce lions whelp,
And udder-loving litter of each brute
That roams the mead; and therefore makes she suit,

The fair one, for fulfilment to the end
Of things these signs portend —
Which partly smile, indeed, but partly scowl —
The phantasms of the fowl.
I call Ieïos Paian to avert
She work the Danaoi hurt
By any thwarting waftures, long and fast
Holdings from sail of ships :
And sacrifice, another than the last,
She for herself precipitate —
Something unlawful, feast for no man's lips,
Builder of quarrels, with the House cognate —
Having in awe no husband : for remains
A frightful, backward-darting in the path,
Wily house-keeping chronicler of wrath,
That has to punish that old children's fate !"
Such things did Kalchas, — with abundant gains
As well, — vociferate,
Predictions from the birds, in journeying,
Above the abode of either king.
With these, symphonious, sing —
Ah, Linos, say — ah, Linos, song of wail !
But may the good prevail !

Zeus, whosoe'er he be, — if that express
Aught dear to him on whom I call —
So do I him address.
I cannot liken out, by all
Admeasurement of powers,
Any but Zeus for refuge at such hours,
If veritably needs I must
From off my soul its vague care-burthen thrust.

Not — whosoever was the great of yore,
Bursting to bloom with bravery all round —

Is in our mouths : he was, but is no more.
And who it was that after came to be,
Met the thrice-throwing wrestler, — he
Is also gone to ground.
But " Zeus " — if any, heart and soul, that name —
Shouting the triumph-praise — proclaim,
Complete in judgment shall that man be found.
Zeus, who leads onward mortals to be wise,
Appoints that suffering masterfully teach.
In sleep, before the heart of each,
A woe-remembering travail sheds in dew
Discretion, — ay, and melts the unwilling too
By what, perchance, may be a graciousness
Of gods, enforced no less, —
As they, commanders of the crew,
Assume the awful seat.

And then the old leader of the Achaian fleet,
Disparaging no seer —
With bated breath to suit misfortune's inrush here
— (What time it labored, that Achaian host,
By stay from sailing, — every pulse at length
Emptied of vital strength, —
Hard over Kalchis shore-bound, current-crost
In Aulis station, — while the winds which post
From Strumon, ill-delayers, famine-fraught,
Tempters of man to sail where harborage is naught,
Spendthrifts of ships and cables, turning time
To twice the length, — these carded, by delay,
To less and less away
The Argeians' flowery prime :
And when a remedy more grave and grand
Than aught before, — yea, for the storm and dearth, —
The prophet to the foremost in command

Shrieked forth, as cause of this
Adducing Artemis,
So that the Atreidai striking staves on earth
Could not withhold the tear) —
Then did the king, the elder, speak this clear.

"Heavy the fate, indeed, — to disobey!
Yet heavy if my child I slay,
The adornment of my household: with the tide
Of virgin-slaughter, at the altar-side,
A father's hands defiling: which the way
Without its evils, say?
How shall I turn fleet-fugitive,
Failing of duty to allies?
Since for a wind-abating sacrifice
And virgin blood, — 't is right they strive,
Nay, madden with desire.
Well may it work them — this that they require!"

But when he underwent necessity's
Yoke-trace, — from soul blowing unhallowed change
Unclean, abominable, — thence — another man —
The audacious mind of him began
Its wildest range.
For this it is gives mortals hardihood —
Some vice-devising miserable mood
Of madness, and first woe of all the brood.
The sacrificer of his daughter — strange! —
He dared become, to expedite
Woman-avenging warfare, — anchors weighed
With such prelusive rite!

Prayings and callings "Father" — naught they made
Of these, and of the virgin-age, —

Captains heart-set on war to wage!
His ministrants, vows done, the father bade —
Kid-like, above the altar, swathed in pall,
Take her — lift high, and have no fear at all,
Head-downward, and the fair mouth's guard
And frontage hold, — press hard
From utterance a curse against the House
By dint of bit — violence bridling speech.
And as to ground her saffron-vest she shed,
She smote the sacrificers all and each
With arrow sweet and piteous,
From the eye only sped, —
Significant of will to use a word,
Just as in pictures: since, full many a time,
In her sire's guest-hall, by the well-heaped board
Had she made music, — lovingly with chime
Of her chaste voice, that unpolluted thing,
Honored the third libation, — paian that should bring
Good fortune to the sire she loved so well.

What followed — those things I nor saw nor tell.
But Kalchas' arts, — whate'er they indicate, —
Miss of fulfilment never: it is fate.
True, justice makes, in sufferers, a desire
To know the future woe preponderate.
But — hear before is need?
To that, farewell and welcome! 't is the same, indeed,
As grief beforehand: clearly, part for part,
Conformably to Kalchas' art,
Shall come the event.
And be they as they may, things subsequent, —
What is to do, prosperity betide
E'en as we wish it! — we, the next allied,
Sole guarding barrier of the Apian land.

I am come, reverencing power in thee,
O Klutaimnestra! For 't is just we bow
To the ruler's wife,— the male-seat man-bereaved.
But if thou, having heard good news, — or none, —
For good news' hope dost sacrifice thus wide,
I would hear gladly: art thou mute, — no grudge!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Good-news-announcer, may — as is the byword —
Morn become, truly, — news from Night his mother!
But thou shalt learn joy past all hope of hearing.
Priamos' city have the Argeioi taken.

CHOROS.

How sayest? The word, from want of faith, escaped me.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Troia the Achaioi hold: do I speak plainly?

CHOROS.

Joy overcreeps me, calling forth the tear-drop.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Right! for, that glad thou art, thine eye convicts thee.

CHOROS.

For — what to thee, of all this, trusty token?

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

What's here! how else? unless the god have cheated.

CHOROS.

Haply thou flattering shows of dreams respectest?

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

No fancy would I take of soul sleep-burthened.

CHOROS.

But has there puffed thee up some unwinged omen?

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

As a young maid's my mind thou mockest grossly.

CHOROS.

Well, at what time was — even sacked, the city? 299

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Of this same mother Night — the dawn, I tell thee.

CHOROS.

And who of messengers could reach this swiftness?

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Hephaistos — sending a bright blaze from Ide.
Beacon did beacon send, from fire the poster,
Hitherward: Ide to the rock Hermaian
Of Lemnos: and a third great torch o' the island
Zeus' seat received in turn, the Athoan summit.
And, — so upsoaring as to stride sea over,
The strong lamp-voyager, and all for joyance —
Did the gold-glorious splendor, any sun like, 309
Pass on — the pine-tree — to Makistos' watch-place;
Who did not, — tardy, — caught, no wits about him,
By sleep, — decline his portion of the missive.
And far the beacon's light, on stream Euripos
Arriving, made aware Messapios' warders,
And up they lit in turn, played herald onwards,
Kindling with flame a heap of gray old heather.
And, strengthening still, the lamp, decaying nowise,
Springing o'er Plain Asopos, — full-moon-fashion
Effulgent, — toward the crag of Mount Kithairon,

Roused a new rendering-up of fire the escort —
And light, far escort, lacked no recognition
O' the guard — as burning more than burnings told you.
And over Lake Gorgopis light went leaping,
And, at Mount Aigiplanktos safe arriving,
Enforced the law — "to never stint the fire-stuff."
And they send, lighting up with ungrudged vigor,
Of flame a huge beard, ay, the very foreland
So as to strike above, in burning onward,
The look-out which commands the Strait Saronic.
Then did it dart until it reached the outpost
Mount Arachnaios here, the city's neighbor;
And then darts to this roof of the Atreidai
This light of Ide's fire not unforefathered!
Such are the rules prescribed the flambeau-bearers:
He beats that 's first and also last in running.
Such is the proof and token I declare thee,
My husband having sent me news from Troia.

CHOROS.

The gods, indeed, anon will I pray, woman!
But now, these words to hear, and sate my wonder
Thoroughly, I am fain — if twice thou tell them.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Troia do the Achaioi hold, this same day.
I think a noise — no mixture — reigns i' the city.
Sour wine and unguent pour thou in one vessel —
Standers-apart, not lovers, wouldst thou style them:
And so, of captives and of conquerors, part-wise
The voices are to hear, of fortune diverse.
For those, indeed, upon the bodies prostrate
Of husbands, brothers, children upon parents
— The old men, from a throat that 's free no longer,

Shriekingly wail the death-doom of their dearest:
While these — the after-battle hungry labor,
Which prompts night-faring, marshals them to breakfast
On the town's store, according to no billet
Of sharing, but as each drew lot of fortune.
In the spear-captured Troic habitations
House they already: from the frosts upæthral
And dews delivered, will they, luckless creatures,
Without a watch to keep, slumber all night through.
And if they fear the gods, the city-guarders,
And the gods' structures of the conquered country,
They may not — capturers — soon in turn be captive.
But see no prior lust befall the army
To sack things sacred — by gain-cravings vanquished!
For there needs homeward the return's salvation,
To round the new limb back o' the double race-course.
And guilty to the gods if came the army,
Awakened up the sorrow of those slaughtered
Might be — should no outbursting evils happen.
But may good beat — no turn to see i' the balance!
For, many benefits I want the gain of.

CHOROS.

Woman, like prudent man thou kindly speakest.
And I, thus having heard thy trusty tokens,
The gods to rightly hail forthwith prepare me;
For, grace that must be paid has crowned our labors.

O Zeus the king, and friendly Night
Of these brave boons bestower —
Thou who didst fling on Troia's every tower
The o'er-roofing snare, that neither great thing might,
Nor any of the young ones, overpass
Captivity's great sweep-net — one and all

Of Ate held in thrall!
Ay, Zeus I fear — the guest's friend great — who was
The doer of this, and long since bent
The bow on Alexandros with intent
That neither wide o' the white
Nor o'er the stars the foolish dart should light.
The stroke of Zeus — they have it, as men say!
This, at least, from the source track forth we may!
As he ordained, so has he done.
"No" — said some one —
"The gods think fit to care
Nowise for mortals, such
As those by whom the good and fair
Of things denied their touch
Is trampled!" but he was profane.
That they do care, has been made plain
To offspring of the over-bold,
Outbreathing "Ares" greater than is just —
Houses that spill with more than they can hold,
More than is best for man. Be man's what must
Keep harm off, so that in himself he find
Sufficiency — the well-endowed of mind!
For there's no bulwark in man's wealth to him
Who, through a surfeit, kicks — into the dim
And disappearing — Right's great altar.

Yes—

It urges him, the sad persuasiveness,
Ate's insufferable child that schemes
Treason beforehand: and all cure is vain.
It is not hidden: out it glares again,
A light dread-lamping-mischief, just as gleams
The badness of the bronze;
Through rubbing, puttings to the touch,

Black-clotted is he, judged at once.
He seeks — the boy — a flying bird to clutch,
The insufferable brand
Setting upon the city of his land
Whereof not any god hears prayer;
While him who brought about such evils there,
That unjust man, the god in grapple throws.
Such an one, Paris goes
Within the Atreidai's house —
Shamed the guest's board by robbery of the spouse.

And, leaving to her townsmen throngs a-spread
With shields, and spear-thrusts of sea-armament,
And bringing Ilion, in a dowry's stead,
Destruction — swiftly through the gates she went,
Daring the undareable. But many a groan outbroke
From prophets of the House as thus they spoke.
"Woe, woe the House, the House and Rulers, — woe
The marriage-bed and dints
A husband's love imprints!
There she stands silent! meets no honor — no
Shame — sweetest still to see of things gone long ago!
And, through desire of one across the main,
A ghost will seem within the house to reign:
And hateful to the husband is the grace
Of well-shaped statues: from — in place of eyes
Those blanks — all Aphrodite dies.

"But dream-appearing mournful fantasies —
There they stand, bringing grace that 's vain.
For vain 't is, when brave things one seems to view;
The fantasy has floated off, hands through;
Gone, that appearance, — nowise left to creep, —
On wings, the servants in the paths of sleep!"
Woes, then, in household and on hearth, are such

As these — and woes surpassing these by much.
But not these only : everywhere —
For those who from the land
Of Hellas issued in a band,
Sorrow, the heart must bear,
Sits in the home of each, conspicuous there.
Many a circumstance, at least,
Touches the very breast.
For those
Whom any sent away, — he knows :
And in the live man's stead,
Armor and ashes reach
The house of each.

For Ares, gold-exchanger for the dead,
And balance-holder in the fight o' the spear,
Due-weight from Ilion sends —
What moves the tear on tear —
A charred scrap to the friends :
Filling with well-packed ashes every urn,
For man — that was — the sole return.
And they groan — praising much, the while,
Now this man as experienced in the strife,
Now that, fallen nobly on a slaughtered pile,
Because of — not his own — another's wife.
But things there be, one barks,
When no man harks :
A surreptitious grief that 's grudge
Against the Atreidai who first sought the judge.
But some there, round the rampart, have
In Ilian earth, each one his grave :
All fair-formed as at birth,
It hid them — what they have and hold — the hostile earth.

And big with anger goes the city's word,
And pays a debt by public curse incurred.
And ever with me — as about to hear
A something night-involved — remains my fear:
Since of the many-slayers — not
Unwatching are the gods.
The black Erinues, at due periods —
Whoever gains the lot
Of fortune with no right —
Him, by life's strain and stress
Back-again-beaten from success,
They strike blind: and among the out-of-sight
For who has got to be, avails no might.
The being praised outrageously
Is grave, for at the eyes of such an one
Is launched, from Zeus, the thunder-stone.
Therefore do I decide
For so much and no more prosperity
Than of his envy passes unespied.
Neither a city-sacker would I be,
Nor life, myself by others captive, see.

A swift report has gone our city through,
From fire, the good-news messenger: if true,
Who knows? Or is it not a god-sent lie?
Who is so childish and deprived of sense
That, having, at announcements of the flame
Thus novel, felt his own heart fired thereby,
He then shall at a change of evidence,
Be worsted just the same?
It is conspicuous in a woman's nature,
Before its view to take a grace for granted:
Too trustful, — on her boundary, usurpature
Is swiftly made;

But swiftly, too, decayed,
The glory perishes by woman vaunted.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Soon shall we know — of these light-bearing torches,
And beacons and exchanges, fire with fire —
If they are true, indeed, or if, dream-fashion,
This gladsome light came and deceived our judgment.
Yon herald from the shore I see, o'ershadowed
With boughs of olive: dust, mud's thirsty brother,
Close neighbors on his garb, thus testify me
That neither voiceless, nor yet kindling for thee
Mountain-wood-flame, shall he explain by fire-smoke:
But either tell out more the joyance, speaking. . . .
Word contrary to which, I aught but love it!
For may good be — to good that's known — appendage!

CHOROS.

Whoever prays for aught else to this city
— May he himself reap fruit of his mind's error!

HERALD.

Ha, my forefathers' soil of earth Argeian!
Thee, in this year's tenth light, am I returned to —
Of many broken hopes, on one hope chancing;
For never prayed I, in this earth Argeian
Dying, to share my part in tomb the dearest.
Now, hail thou earth, and hail thou also, sunlight,
And Zeus, the country's lord, and king the Puthian
From bow no longer urging at us arrows!
Enough, beside Skamandros, cam'st thou adverse:
Now, contrary, be saviour thou and healer,
O king Apollon! And gods conquest-granting,
All — I invoke too, and my tutelary

Hermes, dear herald, heralds' veneration, —
And Heroes our forthsenders, — friendly, once more
The army to receive, the war-spear's leavings!
Ha, mansions of my monarchs, roofs beloved,
And awful seats, and deities sun-fronting —
Receive with pomp your monarch, long time absent!
For he comes bringing light in night-time to you,
In common with all these — king Agamemnon.
But kindly greet him — for clear shows your duty —
Who has dug under Troia with the mattock
Of Zeus the Avenger, whereby plains are out-ploughed,
Altars unrecognizable, and gods' shrines,
And the whole land's seed thoroughly has perished.
And such a yoke-strap having cast round Troia,
The elder king Atreides, happy man — he
Comes to be honored, worthiest of what mortals
Now are. Nor Paris nor the accomplice-city
Outvaunts their deed as more than they are done-by:
For, in a suit for rape and theft found guilty,
He missed of plunder and, in one destruction,
Fatherland, house and home has mowed to atoms:
Debts the Priamidai have paid twice over.

CHOROS.

Hail, herald from the army of Achaians!

HERALD.

I hail: — to die, will gainsay gods no longer!

CHOROS.

Love of this fatherland did exercise thee?

HERALD.

So that I weep, at least, with joy, my eyes full.

CHOROS.

What, of this gracious sickness were ye gainers?

HERALD.

How now? instructed, I this speech shall master.

CHOROS.

For those who loved you back, with longing stricken.

HERALD.

This land yearned for the yearning army, say'st thou?

CHOROS.

So as to set me oft, from dark mind, groaning.

HERALD.

Whence came this ill mind — hatred to the army? 570

CHOROS.

Of old, I use, for mischief's physic, silence.

HERALD.

And how, the chiefs away, did you fear any?

CHOROS.

So that now, — late thy word, — much joy were — dying!

HERALD.

For well have things been worked out: these, — in much time,
Some of them, one might say, had luck in falling,
While some were faulty: since who, gods excepted,
Goes, through the whole time of his life, ungrieving?
For labors should I tell of, and bad lodgments,

Narrow deckways ill-strewn, too, — what the day's woe
We did not groan at getting for our portion?
As for land-things, again, on went more hatred!
Since beds were ours hard by the foemen's ramparts,
And, out of heaven and from the earth, the meadow
Dews kept a-sprinkle, an abiding damage
Of vestures, making hair a wild-beast matting.
Winter, too, if one told of it — bird-slaying —
Such as, unbearable, Idaian snow brought —
Or heat, when waveless, on its noontide couches
Without a wind, the sea would slumber falling
— Why must one mourn these? O'er and gone is labor:
O'er and gone is it, even to those dead ones,
So that no more again they mind uprising.
Why must we tell in numbers those deprived ones,
And the live man be vexed with fate's fresh outbreak?
Rather, I bid full farewell to misfortunes!
For us, the left from out the Argeian army,
The gain beats, nor does sorrow counterbalance.
So that 't is fitly boasted of, this sunlight,
By us, o'er sea and land the aery flyers,
"Troia at last taking, the band of Argives
Hang up such trophies to the gods of Hellas
Within their domes — new glory to grow ancient!"
Such things men having heard must praise the city
And army-leaders: and the grace which wrought them —
Of Zeus, shall honored be. Thou hast my whole word.

CHOROS.

O'ercome by words, their sense I do not gainsay.
For, aye this breeds youth in the old — "to learn well."

But these things most the house and Klutaimnestra
Concern, 't is likely: while they make me rich, too.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

I shouted long ago, indeed, for joyance,
When came that first night-messenger of fire
Proclaiming Ilion's capture and dispersion.
And some one, girding me, said, "Through fire-bearers
Persuaded — Troia to be sacked now, thinkest?
Truly, the woman's way, — high to lift heart up!"
By such words I was made seem wit-bewildered:
Yet still I sacrificed; and, — female-song with, —
A shout one man and other, through the city,
Set up, congratulating in the gods' seats,
Soothing the incense-eating flame right fragrant.
And now, what's more, indeed, why need'st thou tell me?
I of the king himself shall learn the whole word:
And, — as may best be, — I my revered husband
Shall hasten, as he comes back, to receive: for —
What 's to a wife sweeter to see than this light
(Her husband, by the god saved, back from warfare)
So as to open gates? This tell my husband —
To come at soonest to his loving city.
A faithful wife at home may he find, coming!
Such an one as he left — the dog o' the household —
Trusty to him, adverse to the ill-minded,
And, in all else, the same: no signet-impress
Having done harm to, in that time's duration.
I know nor pleasure, nor blameworthy converse
With any other man more than — bronze-dippings!

HERALD.

Such boast as this — brimful of the veracious —
Is, for a high-born dame, not bad to send forth!

CHOROS.

Ay, she spoke thus to thee — that hast a knowledge
From clear interpreters — a speech most seemly.
But speak thou, herald! Meneleos I ask of:
If he, returning, back in safety also
Will come with you — this land's beloved chieftain?

HERALD.

There 's no way I might say things false and pleasant
For friends to reap the fruits of through a long time.

CHOROS.

How then if, speaking good, things true thou chance on?

HERALD.

For not well-hidden things become they, sundered.
The man has vanished from the Achaic army,
He and his ship too. I announce no falsehood.

CHOROS.

Whether forth-putting openly from Ilion,
Or did storm — wide woe — snatch him from the army?

HERALD.

Like topping bowman, thou hast touched the target,
And a long sorrow hast succinctly spoken.

CHOROS.

Whether, then, of him, as a live or dead man
Was the report by other sailors bruited?

HERALD.

Nobody knows so as to tell out clearly
Excepting Helios who sustains earth's nature.

CHOROS.

How say'st thou then, did storm the naval army
Attack and end, by the celestials' anger?

HERALD.

It suits not to defile a day auspicious
With ill-announcing speech: distinct each god's due:
And when a messenger with gloomy visage
To a city bears a fall'n host's woes — God ward off! —
One popular wound that happens to the city,
And many sacrificed from many households —
Men, scourged by that two-thonged whip Ares loves so,
Double spear-headed curse, bloody yoke-couple, —
Of woes like these, doubtless, whoe'er comes weighted,
Him does it suit to sing the Erinues' paian.
But who, of matters saved a glad-news-bringer,
Comes to a city in good estate rejoicing. . . .
How shall I mix good things with evil, telling
Of storm against the Achaioi, urged by gods' wrath?
For they swore league, being arch-foes before that,
Fire and the sea: and plighted troth approved they,
Destroying the unhappy Argeian army.
At night began the bad-wave-outbreak evils;
For, ships against each other Threkian breezes
Shattered: and these, butted at in a fury
By storm and typhoon, with surge rain-resounding, —
Off they went, vanished, thro' a bad herd's whirling.
And, when returned the brilliant light of Helios,
We view the Aigaian sea on flower with corpses
Of men Achaian and with naval ravage.
But us indeed, and ship, unhurt i' the hull too,
Either some one outstole us or outprayed us —
Some god — no man it was the tiller touching.

And Fortune, savior, willing on our ship sat.
So as it neither had in harbor wave-surge
Nor ran aground against a shore all rocky.
And then, the water-Haides having fled from
In the white day, not trusting to our fortune,
We chewed the cud in thoughts — this novel sorrow
O' the army laboring and badly pounded.
And now — if any one of them is breathing —
They talk of us as having perished: why not?
And we — that they the same fate have, imagine.
May it be for the best! Meneleos, then,
Foremost and specially to come, expect thou!
If (that is) any ray o' the sun reports him
Living and seeing to — by Zeus' contrivings,
Not yet disposed to quite destroy the lineage —
Some hope is he shall come again to household.
Having heard such things, know, thou truth art hearing!

CHOROS.

Who may he have been that named thus wholly with exactitude —
(Was he some one whom we see not, by forecastings of the future
Guiding tongue in happy mood?)
— Her with battle for a bridegroom, on all sides contention-wooed,
Helena? Since — mark the suture! —
Ship's-Hell, Man's-Hell, City's-Hell,
From the delicately-pompous curtains that pavilion well,
Forth, by favor of the gale
Of earth-born Zephurcs did she sail.
Many shield-bearers, leaders of the pack,
Sailed too upon their track,

Theirs who had directed oar,
Then visible no more,
To Simois' leaf-luxuriant shore —
For sake of strife all gore!

To Ilion Wrath, fulfilling her intent,
This marriage-care — the rightly named so — sent:
In after-time, for the tables' abuse
And that of the hearth-partaker Zeus,
Bringing to punishment
Those who honored with noisy throat
The honor of the bride, the hymenæal note
Which did the kinsfolk then to singing urge.
But, learning a new hymn for that which was,
The ancient city of Priamos
Groans probably a great and general dirge,
Denominating Paris
"The man that miserably marries:" —
She who, all the while before,
A life, that was a general dirge
For citizens' unhappy slaughter, bore.

And thus a man, by no milk's help,
Within his household reared a lion's whelp
That loved the teat
In life's first festal stage:
Gentle as yet,
A true child-lover, and, to men of age,
A thing whereat pride warms;
And oft he had it in his arms
Like any new-born babe, bright-faced, to hand
Wagging its tail, at belly's strict command.

But in due time upgrown,
The custom of progenitors was shown:

For — thanks for sustenance repaying
With ravage of sheep slaughtered —
It made unbidden feast;
With blood the house was watered,
To household came a woe there was no staying:
Great mischief many-slaying!
From God it was — some priest
Of Ate, in the house, by nurture thus increased.

At first, then, to the city of Ilion went
A soul, as I might say, of windless calm —
Wealth's quiet ornament,
An eyes'-dart bearing balm,
Love's spirit-biting flower.
But — from the true course bending —
She brought about, of marriage, bitter ending:
Ill-resident, ill-mate, in power
Passing to the Priamidai — by sending
Of Hospitable Zeus —
Erinus for a bride, — to make brides mourn, her dower.

Spoken long ago
Was the ancient saying
Still among mortals staying:
"Man's great prosperity at height of rise
Engenders offspring nor unchilded dies;
And, from good fortune, to such families,
Buds forth insatiate woe."
Whereas, distinct from any,
Of my own mind I am:
For 't is the unholy deed begets the many,
Resembling each its dam.
Of households that correctly estimate,
Ever a beauteous child is born of Fate.
But ancient Arrogance delights to generate

Arrogance, young and strong mid mortals' sorrow,
Or now, or then, when comes the appointed morrow.
And she bears young Satiety;
And, fiend with whom nor fight nor war can be,
Unholy Daring — twin black Curses
Within the household, children like their nurses.

But Justice shines in smoke-grimed habitations,
And honors the well-omened life;
While, — gold-besprinkled stations
Where the hands' filth is rife,
With backward-turning eyes
Leaving, — to holy seats she hies,
Not worshipping the power of wealth
Stamped with applause by stealth:
And to its end directs each thing begun.
Approach then, my monarch, of Troia the sacker, of Atreus the son!
How ought I address thee, how ought I revere thee, — nor yet overhitting
Nor yet underbending the grace that is fitting?
Many of mortals hasten to honor the seeming-to-be —
Passing by justice: and, with the ill-faring, to groan as he groans all are free.
But no bite of the sorrow their liver has reached to:
They say with the joyful, — one outside on each, too,
As they force to a smile smileless faces.
But whoever is good at distinguishing races
In sheep of his flock — it is not for the eyes
Of a man to escape such a shepherd's surprise,
As they seem, from a well-wishing mind,
In watery friendship to fawn and be kind.
Thou to me, then, indeed, sending an army for Helena's sake,

(I will not conceal it) wast — oh, by no help of the Muses! — depicted
Not well of thy midriff the rudder directing, — convicted
Of bringing a boldness they did not desire to the men with existence at stake.
But now — from no outside of mind, nor unlovingly — gracious thou art
To those who have ended the labor, fulfilling their part;
And in time shalt thou know, by inquiry instructed,
Who of citizens justly, and who not to purpose, the city conducted.

AGAMEMNON.

First, indeed, Argos, and the gods, the local,
'T is right addressing — those with me the partners
In this return and right things done the city
Of Priamos: gods who, from no tongue hearing
The rights o' the cause, for Ilion's fate manslaught'rous
Into the bloody vase, not oscillating,
Put the vote-pebbles, while, o' the rival vessel,
Hope rose up to the lip-edge: filled it was not.
By smoke the captured city is still conspicuous:
Ate's burnt offerings live: and, dying with them,
The ash sends forth the fulsome blasts of riches.
Of these things, to the gods grace many-mindful
'T is right I render, since both nets outrageous
We built them round with, and, for sake of woman,
It did the city to dust — the Argeian monster,
The horse's nestling, the shield-bearing people
That made a leap, at setting of the Pleiads,
And, vaulting o'er the tower, the raw-flesh-feeding
Lion licked up his fill of blood tyrannic.

I to the gods indeed prolonged this preface;
But — as for *thy* thought, I remember hearing —
I say the same, and thou co-pleader hast me.
Since few of men this faculty is born with —
To honor, without grudge, their friend, successful.
For moody, on the heart, a poison seated
Its burthen doubles to who gained the sickness:
By his own griefs he is himself made heavy,
And out-of-door prosperity seeing groans at.
Knowing, I 'd call (for well have I experienced)
" Fellowship's mirror," " phantom of a shadow,"
Those seeming to be mighty gracious to me:
While just Odusseus — he who sailed not willing —
When joined on, was to me the ready trace-horse.
This of him, whether dead or whether living,
I say. For other city-and-gods' concernment —
Appointing common courts, in full assemblage
We will consult. And as for what holds seemly —
How it may lasting stay well, must be counselled:
While what has need of medicines Paionian
We, either burning or else cutting kindly,
Will make endeavor to turn pain from sickness.
And now into the domes and homes by altar
Going, I to the gods first raise the right-hand —
They who, far sending, back again have brought me.
And Victory, since she followed, fixed remain she!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Men, citizens, Argeians here, my worships!
I shall not shame me, consort-loving manners
To tell before you: for in time there dies off
The diffidence from people. Not from others
Learning, I of myself will tell the hard life
I bore so long as this man was 'neath Ilion.

First: for a woman, from the male divided,
To sit at home alone, is monstrous evil —
Hearing the many rumors back-revenging:
And for now This to come, now That bring after
Woe, and still worse woe, bawling in the household!
And truly, if so many wounds had chanced on
My husband here, as homeward used to dribble
Report, he 's pierced more than a net to speak of!
While, were he dying (as the words abounded)
A triple-bodied Geruon the Second,
Plenty above — for loads below I count not —
Of earth a three-share cloak he 'd boast of taking,
Once only dying in each several figure!
Because of suchlike rumors back-revenging,
Many the halters from my neck, above head,
Others than *I* loosed — loosed from neck by main force!
From this cause, sure, the boy stands not beside me —
Possessor of our troth-plights, thine and mine too —
As ought Orestes: be not thou astonished!
For, him brings up our well-disposed guest-captive
Strophios the Phokian — ills that told on both sides
To me predicting — both of thee 'neath Ilion
The danger, and if anarchy's mob-uproar
Should overthrow thy council; since 't is born with
Mortals, — whoe'er has fallen, the more to kick him.
Such an excuse, I think, no cunning carries!
As for myself — why, of my wails the rushing
Fountains are dried up: not in them a drop more!
And in my late-to-bed eyes I have damage,
Bewailing what concerned thee, those torch-holdings
Forever unattended to. In dreams — why,
Beneath the light wing-beats o' the gnat, I woke up
As he went buzzing — sorrows that concerned thee

Seeing, that filled more than their fellow-sleep-time.
Now, all this having suffered, from soul grief-free
I would style this man here the dog o' the stables,
The savior forestay of the ship, the high roof's
Ground-prop, son sole-begotten to his father,
— Ay, land appearing to the sailors past hope,
Loveliest day to see after a tempest,
To the wayfaring-one athirst a well-spring,
— The joy, in short, of 'scaping all that 's — fatal !
I judge him worth addresses such as these are
— Envy stand off ! — for many those old evils
We underwent. And now, to me — dear headship ! —
Dismount thou from this car, not earthward setting
The foot of thine, O king, that 's Ilion's spoiler !
Slave-maids, why tarry ? — whose the task allotted
To strew the soil o' the road with carpet-spreadings.
Immediately be purple-strewn the pathway,
So that to home unhoped may lead him — Justice !
As for the rest, care shall — by no sleep conquered —
Dispose things — justly (gods to aid !) appointed.

AGAMEMNON.

Offspring of Leda, of my household warder,
Suitably to my absence hast thou spoken,
For long the speech thou didst outstretch ! But aptly
To praise — from others ought to go this favor.
And for the rest, — not me, in woman's fashion,
Mollify, nor — as mode of barbarous man is —
To me gape forth a groundward-falling clamor !
Nor, strewing it with garments, make my passage
Envied ! Gods, sure, with these behoves we honor:
But, for a mortal on these varied beauties
To walk — to me, indeed, is nowise fear-free.
I say — as man, not god, to me do homage !

Apart from foot-mats both and varied vestures,
Renown is loud, and — not to lose one's senses,
God's greatest gift. Behoves we him call happy
Who has brought life to end in loved well-being.
If all things I might manage thus — brave man, I!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Come now, this say, nor feign a feeling to me!

AGAMEMNON.

With feeling, know indeed, I do not tamper!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Vowed'st thou to the gods, in fear, to act thus?

AGAMEMNON.

If any, *I* well knew resolve I outspoke.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

What think'st thou Priamos had done, thus victor?

AGAMEMNON.

On varied vests — I do think — he had passaged.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Then, do not, struck with awe at human censure. . . .

AGAMEMNON.

Well, popular mob-outcry much avails too.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Ay, but the unenvied is not the much valued.

AGAMEMNON.

Sure, 't is no woman's part to long for battle.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Why, to the prosperous, even suits a beating.

AGAMEMNON.

What? thou this beating us in war dost prize too?

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Persuade thee! power, for once, grant *me* — and willing!

AGAMEMNON.

But if this seem so to thee — shoes, let some one
Loose under, quick — foot's serviceable carriage!
And me, on these sea-products walking, may no
Grudge from a distance, from the god's eye, strike at!
For great shame were my strewment-spoiling — riches
Spoiling with feet, and silver-purchased textures!
Of these things, thus then. But this female-stranger
Tenderly take inside! Who conquers mildly
God, from afar, benignantly regardeth.
For, willing, no one wears a yoke that 's servile:
And she, of many valuables, outpicked
The flower, the army's gift, myself has followed.
So, — since to hear thee, I am brought about thus, —
I go into the palace — purples treading.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

There is the sea — and what man shall exhaust it? —
Feeding much purple's worth-its-weight-in-silver
Dye, ever fresh and fresh, our garments' tincture;
At home, such wealth, king, we begin — by gods' help —
With having, and to lack, the household knows not.
Of many garments had I vowed a treading
(In oracles if fore-enjoined the household)

Of this dear soul the safe-return-price scheming!
For, root existing, foliage goes up houses,
O'erspreading shadow against Seirios dog-star;
And, thou returning to the hearth domestic,
Warmth, yea, in winter dost thou show returning.
And when, too, Zeus works, from the green-grape acrid,
Wine — then, already, cool in houses cometh —
The perfect man his home perambulating!
Zeus, Zeus Perfecter, these my prayers perfect thou!
Thy care be — yea — of things thou mayst make perfect!

CHOROS.

Wherefore to me, this fear —
Groundedly stationed here
Fronting my heart, the portent-watcher — flits she?
Wherefore should prophet-play
The uncalled and unpaid lay,
Nor — having spat forth fear, like bad dreams — sits she
On the mind's throne beloved — well-suasive Boldness?
For time, since, by a throw of all the hands,
The boat's stern-cables touched the sands,
Has passed from youth to oldness, —
When under Ilion rushed the ship-borne bands.

And from my eyes I learn —
Being myself my witness — their return.
Yet, all the same, without a lyre, my soul,
Itself its teacher too, chants from within
Erinus' dirge, not having now the whole
Of Hope's dear boldness: nor my inwards sin —
The heart that's rolled in whirls against the mind
Justly presageful of a fate behind.
But I pray — things false, from my hope, may fall
Into the fate that's not-fulfilled-at-all!

Especially at least, of health that 's great
The term 's insatiable : for, its weight
— A neighbor, with a common wall between —
Ever will sickness lean ;
And destiny, her course pursuing straight,
Has struck man's ship against a reef unseen.
Now, when a portion, rather than the treasure,
Fear casts from sling, with peril in right measure,
It has not sunk — the universal freight,
(With misery freighted over-full)
Nor has fear whelmed the hull.
Then too the gift of Zeus,
Two-handedly profuse,
Even from the furrows' yield for yearly use
Has done away with famine, the disease ;
But blood of man to earth once falling — deadly, black —
In times ere these, —
Who may, by singing spells, call back ?
Zeus had not else stopped one who rightly knew
The way to bring the dead again.
But, did not an appointed Fate constrain
The Fate from gods, to bear no more than due,
My heart, outstripping what tongue utters,
Would have all out : which now, in darkness, mutters
Moodily grieved, nor ever hopes to find
How she a word in season may unwind
From out the enkindling mind.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Take thyself in, thou too — I say, Kassandra !
Since Zeus — not angrily — in household placed thee
Partaker of hand-sprinklings, with the many
Slaves stationed, his the Owner's altar close to.
Descend from out this car, nor be high-minded !

And truly they do say Alkmené's child once
Bore being sold, slaves' barley-bread his living.
If, then, necessity of this lot o'erbalance,
Much is the favor of old-wealthy masters:
For those who, never hoping, made fine harvest
Are harsh to slaves in all things, beyond measure.
Thou hast — with us — such usage as law warrants.

CHOROS.

To thee it was, she paused plain speech from speaking.
Being inside the fatal nets — obeying,
Thou mayst obey: but thou mayst disobey too!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Why, if she is not, in the swallow's fashion,
Possessed of voice that 's unknown and barbaric,
I, with speech — speaking in mind's scope — persuade her.

CHOROS.

Follow! The best — as things now stand — she speaks of.
Obey thou, leaving this thy car-enthronement!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Well, with this thing at door, for me no leisure
To waste time: as concerns the hearth midnavelled,
Already stand the sheep for fireside slaying
By those who never hoped to have such favor.
If thou, then, aught of this wilt do, delay not!
But if thou, being witless, tak'st no word in,
Speak thou, instead of voice, with hand as Kars do!

CHOROS.

She seems a plain interpreter in need of,
The stranger! and her way — a beast's new-captured!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Why, she is mad, sure, — hears her own bad senses, —
Who, while she comes, leaving a town new-captured,
Yet knows not how to bear the bit o' the bridle
Before she has out-frothed her bloody fierceness.
Not I — throwing away more words — will shamed be!

CHOROS.

But I, — for I compassionate, — will chafe not.
Come, O unhappy one, this car vacating,
Yielding to this necessity, prove yoke's use!

KASSANDRA.

Ototototoi, Gods, Earth, —
Apollon, Apollon!

CHOROS.

Why didst thou "ototoi" concerning Loxias?
Since he is none such as to suit a mourner.

KASSANDRA.

Ototototoi, Gods, Earth, —
Apollon, Apollon!

CHOROS.

Ill-boding here again the god invokes she
— Nowise empowered in woes to stand by helpful.

KASSANDRA.

Apollon, Apollon,
Guard of the ways, my destroyer!
For thou hast quite, this second time, destroyed me.

CHOROS.

To prophesy she seems of her own evils:
Remains the god-gift to the slave-soul present.

KASSANDRA.

Apollon, Apollon,
Guard of the ways, my destroyer!
Ha, whither hast thou led me? to what roof now?

CHOROS.

To the Atreidai's roof: if this thou know'st not,
I tell it thee, nor this wilt thou call falsehood.

KASSANDRA.

How! How!
God-hated, then! Of many a crime it knew —
Self-slaying evils, halters too:
Man's-shambles, blood-besprinkler of the ground!

CHOROS.

She seems to be good-nosed, the stranger: dog-like,
She snuffs indeed the victims she will find there.

KASSANDRA.

How! How!
By the witnesses here I am certain now!
These children bewailing their slaughters — flesh dressed in the fire
And devoured by their sire!

CHOROS.

Ay, we have heard of thy soothsaying glory,
Doubtless: but prophets none are we in scent of!

KASSANDRA.

Ah, gods, what ever does she meditate?
What this new anguish great?
Great in the house here she meditates ill
Such as friends cannot bear, cannot cure it: and still
Off stands all Resistance
Afar in the distance!

CHOROS.

Of these I witless am — these prophesyings.
But those I knew: for the whole city bruits them.

KASSANDRA.

Ah, unhappy one, this thou consummatest?
Thy husband, thy bed's common guest,
In the bath having brightened . . . How shall I declare
Consummation? It soon will be there:
For hand after hand she outstretches,
At life as she reaches! 1109

CHOROS.

Nor yet I've gone with thee! for — after riddles —
Now, in blind oracles, I feel resourceless.

KASSANDRA.

Eh, eh, papai, papai,
What this, I espy?
Some net of Haides undoubtedly!
Nay, rather, the snare
Is she who has share
In his bed, who takes part in the murder there!
But may a revolt —
Unceasing assault —
On the Race, raise a shout 1120
Sacrificial, about
A victim — by stoning —
For murder atoning!

CHOROS.

What this Erinus which i' the house thou callest
To raise her cry? Not me thy word enlightens!
To my heart has run
A drop of the crocus-dye:

Which makes for those
On earth by the spear that lie,
A common close
With life's descending sun.
Swift is the curse begun !

KASSANDRA.

How ! How !
See — see quick !
Keep the bull from the cow !
In the vesture she catching him, strikes him now
With the black-horned trick,
And he falls in the watery vase !
Of the craft killing caldron I tell thee the case !

CHOROS.

I would not boast to be a topping critic
Of oracles : but to some sort of evil
I liken these. From oracles, what good speech
To mortals, beside, is sent ?
It comes of their evils : these arts word-abounding
that sing the event
Bring the fear 't is their office to teach.

KASSANDRA.

Ah me, ah me —
Of me unhappy, evil-destined fortunes !
For I bewail my proper woe
As, mine with his, all into one I throw.
Why hast thou hither me unhappy brought ?
— Unless that I should die with him — for naught !
What else was sought ?

CHOROS.

Thou art some mind-mazed creature, god-possessed :
And all about thyself dost wail

A lay — no lay !
Like some brown nightingale
Insatiable of noise, who — well-away ! —
From her unhappy breast
Keeps moaning Itus, Itus, and his life
With evils, flourishing on each side, rife.

KASSANDRA.

Ah me, ah me,
The fate o' the nightingale, the clear resounder !
For a body wing-borne have the gods cast round her,
And sweet existence, from misfortunes free :
But for myself remains a sundering
With spear, the two-edged thing !

CHOROS.

Whence hast thou this on-rushing god-involving pain
And spasms in vain ?
For, things that terrify,
With changing unintelligible cry
Thou strikest up in tune, yet all the while
After that Orthian style !
Whence hast thou limits to the oracular road,
That evils bode ?

KASSANDRA.

Ah me, the nuptials, the nuptials of Paris, the deadly to friends !
Ah me, of Skamandros the draught
Paternal ! There once, to these ends,
On thy banks was I brought,
The unhappy ! And now, by Kokutos and Acheron's shore
I shall soon be, it seems, these my oracles singing once more !

CHOROS.

Why this word, plain too much,
Hast thou uttered? A babe might learn of such!
I am struck with a bloody bite — here under —
At the fate woe-wreaking
Of thee shrill shrieking:
To me who hear — a wonder!

KASSANDRA.

Ah me, the toils — the toils of the city
The wholly destroyed: ah, pity,
Of the sacrificings my father made
In the ramparts' aid —
Much slaughter of grass-fed flocks — that afforded no cure
That the city should not, as it does now, the burthen endure!
But I, with the soul on fire,
Soon to the earth shall cast me and expire.

CHOROS.

To things, on the former consequent,
Again hast thou given vent:
And 't is some evil-meaning fiend doth move thee,
Heavily falling from above thee,
To melodize thy sorrows — else, in singing,
Calamitous, death-bringing!
And of all this the end
I am without resource to apprehend.

KASSANDRA.

Well then, the oracle from veils no longer
Shall be outlooking, like a bride new-married:
But bright it seems, against the sun's uprisings

Breathing, to penetrate thee: so as, wavelike,
To wash against the rays a woe much greater
Than this. I will no longer teach by riddles.
And witness, running with me, that of evils
Done long ago, I nosing track the footstep!
For, this same roof here — never quits a Choros
One-voiced, not well-tuned since no "well" it utters:
And truly having drunk, to get more courage,
Man's blood — the Komos keeps within the household
— Hard to be sent outside — of sister Furies:
They hymn their hymn — within the house close sitting —
The first beginning curse: in turn spit forth at
The Brother's bed, to him who spurned it hostile.
Have I missed aught, or hit I like a bowman?
False prophet am I, — knock at doors, a babbler?
Henceforward witness, swearing now, I know not
By other's word the old sins of this household!

CHOROS.

And how should oath, bond honorably binding,
Become thy cure? No less I wonder at thee
— That thou, beyond sea reared, a strange-tongued city
Shouldst hit in speaking, just as if thou stood'st by!

KASSANDRA.

Prophet Apollon put me in this office.

CHOROS.

What, even though a god, with longing smitten?

KASSANDRA.

At first, indeed, shame was to me to say this.

CHOROS.

For, more relaxed grows every one who fares well.

KASSANDRA.

But he was athlete to me — huge grace breathing!

CHOROS.

Well, to the work of children, went ye law's way?

KASSANDRA.

Having consented, I played false to Loxias.

CHOROS.

Already when the wits inspired possessed of?

KASSANDRA.

Already townsmen all their woes I foretold.

CHOROS.

How wast thou then unhurt by Loxias' anger?

KASSANDRA.

I no one aught persuaded, when I sinned thus.

CHOROS.

To us, at least, now sooth to say thou seemest.

KASSANDRA.

Halloo, halloo, ah, evils!
Again, straightforward foresight's fearful labor
Whirls me, distracting with prelusive last-lays!
Behold ye those there, in the household seated, —
Young ones, — of dreams approaching to the figures?
Children, as if they died by their beloveds —
Hands they have filled with flesh, the meal domestic —
Entrails and vitals both, most piteous burthen,
Plain they are holding! — which their father tasted!
For this, I say, plans punishment a certain
Lion ignoble, on the bed that wallows,
House-guard (ah, me!) to the returning master

— Mine, since to bear the slavish yoke behoves me !
The ship's commander, Ilion's desolator,
Knows not what things the tongue of the lewd she-dog
Speaking, outspreading, shiny-souled, in fashion
Of Ate hid, will reach to, by ill fortune !
Such things she dares — the female, the male's slayer !
She is . . . how calling her the hateful bite-beast
May I hit the mark ? Some amphisbaina, — Skulla
Housing in rocks, of mariners the mischief,
Revelling Haides' mother, — curse, no truce with,
Breathing at friends ! How piously she shouted,
The all-courageous, as at turn of battle !
She seems to joy at the back-bringing safety !
Of this, too, if I naught persuade, all 's one ! Why ?
What is to be will come. And soon thou, present,
" True prophet all too much " wilt pitying style me.

CHOROS.

Thuestes' feast, indeed, on flesh of children,
I went with, and I shuddered. Fear too holds me
Listing what's true as life, nowise out-imaged.

KASSANDRA.

I say, thou Agamemnon's fate shalt look on.

CHOROS.

Speak good words, O unhappy ! Set mouth sleeping !

KASSANDRA.

But Paian stands in no stead to the speech here.

CHOROS.

Nay, if the thing be near : but never be it !

KASSANDRA.

Thou, indeed, prayest : they to kill are busy.

CHOROS.

Of what man is it ministered, this sorrow?

KASSANDRA.

There again, wide thou look'st of my foretellings.

CHOROS.

For, the fulfiller's scheme I have not gone with.

KASSANDRA.

And yet too well I know the speech Hellenic.

CHOROS.

For Puthian oracles, thy speech, and hard too.

KASSANDRA.

Papai: what fire this! and it comes upon me! 1280
Ototoi, Lukeion, Apollon, ah me — me!
She, the two-footed lioness that sleeps with
The wolf, in absence of the generous lion,
Kill me the unhappy one: and as a poison
Brewing, to put my price too in the anger,
She vows, against her mate this weapon whetting
To pay him back the bringing me, with slaughter.
Why keep I then these things to make me laughed at,
Both wands and, round my neck, oracular fillets?
Thee, at least, ere my own fate will I ruin: 1290
Go, to perdition falling! Boons exchange we —
Some other Ate in my stead make wealthy!
See there — himself, Apollon stripping from me
The oracular garment! having looked upon me
— Even in these adornments, laughed by friends at,
As good as foes, i' the balance weighed: and vainly —
For, called crazed stroller, — as I had been gipsy,
Beggar, unhappy, starved to death, — I bore it.

And now the Prophet — prophet me undoing,
Has led away to these so deadly fortunes!
Instead of my sire's altar, waits the hack-block
She struck with first warm bloody sacrificing!
Yet nowise unavenged of gods will death be:
For there shall come another, our avenger,
The mother-slaying scion, father's doomsman:
Fugitive, wanderer, from this land an exile,
Back shall he come, — for friends, copestone these curses!
For there is sworn a great oath from the gods that
Him shall bring hither his fallen sire's prostration.
Why make I then, like an indweller, moaning?
Since at the first I foresaw Ilion's city
Suffering as it has suffered: and who took it,
Thus by the judgment of the gods are faring.
I go, will suffer, will submit to dying!
But, Haides' gates — these same I call, I speak to,
And pray that on an opportune blow chancing,
Without a struggle, — blood the calm death bringing
In easy outflow, — I this eye may close up!

CHOROS.

O much unhappy, but, again, much learned
Woman, long hast thou outstretched! But if truly
Thou knowest thine own fate, how comes that, like to
A god-led steer, to altar bold thou treadest?

KASSANDRA.

There's no avoidance, — strangers, no! Some time more!

CHOROS.

He last is, anyhow, by time advantaged.

KASSANDRA.

It comes, the day: I shall by flight gain little.

CHOROS.

But know thou patient art from thy brave spirit!

KASSANDRA.

Such things hears no one of the happy-fortuned.

CHOROS.

But gloriously to die — for man is grace, sure.

KASSANDRA.

Ah, sire, for thee and for thy noble children!

CHOROS.

But what thing is it? What fear turns thee backwards?

KASSANDRA.

Alas, alas!

CHOROS.

Why this "Alas!" if 't is no spirit's loathing?

KASSANDRA.

Slaughter blood-dripping does the household smell of!

CHOROS.

How else? This scent is of hearth-sacrifices.

KASSANDRA.

Such kind of steam as from a tomb is proper!

CHOROS.

No Surian honor to the House thou speak'st of!

KASSANDRA.

But I will go, — even in the household wailing
My fate and Agamemnon's. Life suffice me!
Ah, strangers!
I cry not "ah" — as bird at bush — through terror
Idly! to me, the dead this much bear witness:

When, for me — woman, there shall die a woman,
And, for a man ill-wived, a man shall perish!
This hospitality I ask as dying.

CHOROS.

O sufferer, thee — thy foretold fate I pity.

KASSANDRA.

Yet once for all, to speak a speech, I fain am:
No dirge, mine for myself! The sun I pray to,
Fronting his last light! — to my own avengers —
That from my hateful slayers they exact too
Pay for the dead slave — easy-managed hand's work!

CHOROS.

Alas for mortal matters! Happy-fortuned, —
Why, any shade would turn them: if unhappy,
By throws the wetting sponge has spoiled the picture!
And more by much in mortals this I pity.
The being well-to-do —
Insatiate a desire of this
Born with all mortals is,
Nor any is there who
Well-being forces off, aroints
From roofs whereat a finger points,
"No more come in!" exclaiming. This man, too,
To take the city of Priamos did the celestials give,
And, honored by the god, he homeward comes;
But now if, of the former, he shall pay
The blood back, and, for those who ceased to live,
Dying, for deaths in turn new punishment he dooms —
Who, being mortal, would not pray
With an unmischievous
Daimon to have been born — who would not, hearing thus?

AGAMEMNON.

Ah me! I am struck — a right-aimed stroke within me!

CHOROS.

Silence! Who is it shouts "stroke" — "right-aimedly" a wounded one?

AGAMEMNON.

Ah me! indeed again, — a second, struck by!

CHOROS.

This work seems to me completed by this "Ah me" of the king's;
But we somehow may together share in solid counsellings.

CHOROS 1.

I, in the first place, my opinion tell you:
— To cite the townsmen, by help-cry, to house here.

CHOROS 2.

To me, it seems we ought to fall upon them
At quickest — prove the fact by sword fresh-flowing!

CHOROS 3.

And I, of such opinion the partaker,
Vote — to do something: not to wait — the main point!

CHOROS 4.

'T is plain to see: for they prelude as though of
A tyranny the signs they gave the city.

CHOROS 5.

For we waste time; while they, — this waiting's glory
Treading to ground, — allow the hand no slumber.

CHOROS 6.

I know not — chancing on some plan — to tell it:
'T is for the doer to plan of the deed also.

CHOROS 7.

And I am such another: since I 'm schemeless
How to raise up again by words — a dead man!

CHOROS 8.

What, and, protracting life, shall we give way thus
To the disgracers of our home, these rulers?

CHOROS 9.

Why, 't is unbearable: but to die is better:
For death than tyranny is the riper finish!

CHOROS 10.

What, by the testifying "Ah me" of him,
Shall we prognosticate the man as perished?

CHOROS 11.

We must quite know ere speak these things concerning:
For to conjecture and "quite know" are two things.

CHOROS 12.

This same to praise I from all sides abound in —
Clearly to know — Atreides, what he 's doing!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Much having been before to purpose spoken,
The opposite to say I shall not shamed be:
For how should one, to enemies, — in semblance,
Friends, — enmity proposing, — sorrow's net-frame
Enclose, a height superior to outleaping?

To me, indeed, this struggle of old — not mindless
Of an old victory — came: with time, I grant you!
I stand where I have struck, things once accomplished:
And so have done, — and this deny I shall not, —
As that his fate was nor to fly nor ward off.
A wrap-round with no outlet, as for fishes,
I fence about him — the rich woe of the garment:
I strike him twice, and in a double "Aḥ-me!"
He let his limbs go — *there!* And to him, fallen,
The third blow add I, giving — of Below-ground
Zeus, guardian of the dead — the votive favor.
Thus in the mind of him he rages, falling,
And blowing forth a brisk blood-spatter, strikes me
With the dark drop of slaughterous dew — rejoicing
No less than, at the god-given dewy-comfort,
The sown-stuff in its birth-throes from the calyx.
Since so these things are, — Argives, my revered here, —
Ye may rejoice — if ye rejoice: but I — boast!
If it were fit on corpse to pour libation,
That would be right — right over and above, too!
The cup of evils in the house he, having
Filled with such curses, himself coming drinks of.

CHOROS.

We wonder at thy tongue: since bold-mouthed truly
Is she who in such speech boasts o'er her husband!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Ye test me as I were a witless woman:
But I — with heart intrepid — to you knowers
Say (and thou — if thou wilt or praise or blame me,
Comes to the same) — this man is Agamemnon,
My husband, dead, the work of the right hand here,
Ay, of a just artificer: so things are.

CHOROS.

What evil, O woman, food or drink, earth-bred
Or sent from the flowing sea,
Of such having fed
Didst thou set on thee
This sacrifice
And popular cries
Of a curse on thy head?
Off thou hast thrown him, off hast cut
The man from the city : but —
Off from the city thyself shalt be
Cut — to the citizens
A hate immense !

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Now, indeed, thou adjudgest exile to me,
And citizens' hate, and to have popular curses :
Nothing of this against the man here bringing,
Who, no more awe-checked than as 't were a beast's fate, —
With sheep abundant in the well-fleeced graze-flocks, —
Sacrificed *his* child, — dearest fruit of travail
To me, — as song-spell against Threkian blowings.
Not *him* did it behove thee hence to banish
— Pollution's penalty ? But hearing *my* deeds
Justicer rough thou art ! Now, this I tell thee :
To threaten thus — me, one prepared to have thee
(On like conditions, thy hand conquering) o'er me
Rule : but if God the opposite ordain us,
Thou shalt learn — late taught, certes — to be modest.

CHOROS.

Greatly-intending thou art :
Much-mindful, too, hast thou cried

(Since thy mind, with its slaughter-outpouring part,
Is frantic) that over the eyes, a patch
Of blood — with blood to match —
Is plain for a pride!
Yet still, bereft of friends, thy fate
Is — blow with blow to expiate!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

And this thou hearest — of my oaths, just warrant!
By who fulfilled things for my daughter, Justice,
Ate, Erinus, — by whose help I slew him, —
Not mine the fancy — Fear will tread my palace
So long as on my hearth there burns a fire,
Aigisthos as before well-caring for me;
Since he to me is shield, no small, of boldness.
Here does he lie — outrager of this female,
Dainty of all the Chruseids under Ilion;
And she — the captive, the soothsayer also
And couchmate of this man, oracle-speaker,
Faithful bed-fellow, — ay, the sailors' benches
They wore in common, nor unpunished did so,
Since he is — thus! While, as for her, — swan-fashion,
Her latest having chanted, — dying wailing
She lies, — to him, a sweetheart: me she brought to —
My bed's by-nicety — the whet of dalliance.

CHOROS.

Alas, that some
Fate would come
Upon us in quickness —
Neither much sickness
Neither bed-keeping —
And bear unended sleeping,

Now that subdued
Is our keeper, the kindest of mood!
Having borne, for a woman's sake, much strife —
By a woman he withered from life!
Ah me!
Law-breaking Helena who, one,
Hast many, so many souls undone
'Neath Troia! and now the consummated
Much-memorable curse
Hast thou made flower-forth, red
With the blood no rains disperse,
That which was then in the House —
Strife all-subduing, the woe of a spouse.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Nowise, of death the fate —
Burdened by these things — supplicate!
Nor on Helena turn thy wrath
As the man-destroyer, as "she who hath,
Being but one,
Many and many a soul undone
Of the men, the Danaoi" —
And wrought immense annoy!

CHOROS.

Daimon, who fallest
Upon this household and the double-raced
Tantalidai, a rule, minded like theirs displaced,
Thou rulest me with, now,
Whose heart thou gallest!
And on the body, like a hateful crow,
Stationed, all out of tune, his chant to chant
Doth Something vaunt!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Now, of a truth, hast thou set upright
Thy mouth's opinion, —
Naming the Sprite,
The triply gross,
O'er the race that has dominion:
For through him it is that Eros
The carnage-licker
In the belly is bred: ere ended quite
Is the elder throe — new ichor!

CHOROS.

Certainly, great of might
And heavy of wrath, the Sprite
Thou tellest of, in the palace
(Woe, woe!)
— An evil tale of a fate
By Ate's malice
Rendered insatiate!
Oh, oh, —
King, king, how shall I beweep thee?
From friendly soul whatever say?
Thou liest where webs of the spider o'ersweep thee
In impious death, life breathing away.
O me — me!
This couch, not free!
By a slavish death subdued thou art,
From the hand, by the two-edged dart.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Thou boastest this deed to be mine:
But leave off styling me
"The Agamemnonian wife!"
For, showing himself in sign

Of the spouse of the corpse thou dost see,
Did the ancient bitter avenging-ghost
Of Atreus, savage host,
Pay the man here as price —
A full-grown for the young one's sacrifice.

CHOROS.

That no cause, indeed, of this killing art thou,
Who shall be witness-bearer?
How shall he bear it — how?
But the sire's avenging-ghost might be in the deed a sharer.
He is forced on and on
By the kin-born flowing of blood,
— Black Ares: to where, having gone,
He shall leave off, flowing done,
At the frozen-child's-flesh food.
King, king, how shall I beweep thee?
From friendly soul whatever say?
Thou liest where webs of the spider o'ersweep thee
In impious death, life breathing away.
O me — me!
This couch, not free!
By a slavish death subdued thou art,
From the hand, by the two-edged dart.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

No death "unfit for the free"
Do I think this man's to be:
For did not himself a slavish curse
To his household decree?
But the scion of him, myself did nurse —
That much-bewailed Iphigeneia, he
Having done well by, — and as well, nor worse,
Been done to, — let him not in Haides loudly

Bear himself proudly !
Being by sword-destroying death amerced
For that sword's punishment himself inflicted first.

CHOROS.

I at a loss am left —
Of a feasible scheme of mind bereft —
Where I may turn : for the house is falling :
I fear the bloody crash of the rain
That ruins the roof as it bursts amain :
The warning-drop
Has come to a stop.
Destiny doth Justice whet
For other deed of hurt, on other whetstones yet.
Woe, earth, earth — would thou hadst taken *me*
Ere I saw the man I see,
On the pallet-bed
Of the silver-sided bath-vase, dead !
Who is it shall bury him, who
Sing his dirge ? Can it be true
That *thou* wilt dare this same to do —
Having slain thy husband, thine own,
To make his funeral moan :
And for the soul of him, in place
Of his mighty deeds, a graceless grace
To wickedly institute ? By whom
Shall the tale of praise o'er the tomb
At the god-like man be sent —
From the truth of his mind as he toils intent ?

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

It belongs not to thee to declare
This object of care !
By us did he fall — down there !

Did he die — down there ! and down, no less,
We will bury him there, and not beneath
The wails of the household over his death :
But Iphigeneia, — with kindliness, —
His daughter, — as the case requires,
Facing him full, at the rapid-flowing
Passage of Groans shall — both hands throwing
Around him — kiss that kindest of sires !

CHOROS.

This blame comes in the place of blame :
Hard battle it is to judge each claim.
" He is borne away who bears away :
And the killer has all to pay."
And this remains while Zeus is remaining,
" The doer shall suffer in time " — for, such his ordaining.
Who may cast out of the House its cursed brood ?
The race is to Ate glued !

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Thou hast gone into this oracle
With a true result. For me, then, — I will
— To the Daimon of the Pleisthenidai
Making an oath — with all these things comply
Hard as they are to bear. For the rest —
Going from out this House, a guest,
May he wear some other family
To naught, with the deaths of kin by kin !
And, — keeping a little part of my goods, —
Wholly am I contented in
Having expelled from the royal House
These frenzied moods
The mutually-murderous.

AIGISTHOS.

O light propitious oí day justice-bringing!
I may say truly, now, that men's avengers,
The gods from high, of earth behold the sorrows —
Seeing, as I have, i' the spun robes of the Erinues,
This man here lying, — sight to me how pleasant! —
His father's hands' contrivances repaying.
For Atreus, this land's lord, of this man father,
Thuestes, my own father — to speak clearly —
His brother too, — being i' the rule contested, —
Drove forth to exile from both town and household:
And, coming back, to the hearth turned, a suppliant,
Wretched Thuestes found the fate assured him
— Not to die, bloodying his paternal threshold
Just there: but host-wise this man's impious father
Atreus, soul-keenly more than kindly, — seeming
To joyous hold a flesh-day, — to my father
Served up a meal, the flesh of his own children.
The feet indeed and the hands' top divisions
He hid, high up and isolated sitting:
But, their unshowing parts in ignorance taking,
He forthwith eats food — as thou seest — perdition
To the race: and then, 'ware of the deed ill-omened,
He shrieked O! — falls back, vomiting, from the carnage,
And fate on the Pelopidai past bearing
He prays down — putting in his curse together
The kicking down o' the feast — that so might perish
The race of Pleisthenes entire: and thence is
That it is given thee to see this man prostrate.
And I was rightly of this slaughter stitch-man:
Since me, — being third from ten, — with my poor father
He drives out — being then a babe in swathe-bands:

But, grown up, back again has justice brought me:
And of this man I got hold — being without-doors —
Fitting together the whole scheme of ill-will.
So, sweet, in fine, even to die were to me,
Seeing, as I have, this man i' the toils of justice!

CHOROS.

Aigisthos, arrogance in ills I love not.
Dost thou say — willing, thou didst kill the man here,
And, alone, plot this lamentable slaughter?
I say — thy head in justice will escape not
The people's throwing — know that! — stones and curses!

AIGISTHOS.

Thou such things soundest — seated at the lower
Oarage to those who rule at the ship's mid-bench?
Thou shalt know, being old, how heavy is teaching
To one of the like age — bidden be modest!
But chains and old age and the pangs of fasting
Stand out before all else in teaching, — prophets
At souls'-cure! Dost not, seeing aught, see this too?
Against goads kick not, lest tript-up thou suffer!

CHOROS.

Woman, thou, — of him coming new from battle
Houseguard — thy husband's bed the while disgracing, —
For the Army-leader didst thou plan this fate too?

AIGISTHOS.

These words too are of groans the prime-begetters!
Truly a tongue opposed to Orpheus hast thou:
For he led all things by his voice's grace-charm,
But thou, upstirring them by these wild yelpings,
Wilt lead them! Forced, thou wilt appear the tamer!

CHOROS.

So — thou shalt be my king then of the Argeians —
Who, not when for this man his fate thou plannedst,
Daredst to do this deed — thyself the slayer!

AIGISTHOS.

For, to deceive him was the wife's part, certes:
I was looked after — foe, ay, old-begotten!
But out of this man's wealth will I endeavor
To rule the citizens: and the no-man-minder
— Him will I heavily yoke — by no means trace-horse,
A corned-up colt! but that bad friend in darkness,
Famine its housemate, shall behold him gentle.

CHOROS.

Why then, this man here, from a coward spirit,
Didst not thou slay thyself? But, — helped, — a woman,
The country's pest, and that of gods o' the country,
Killed him! Orestes, where may he see light now?
That coming hither back, with gracious fortune,
Of both these he may be the all-conquering slayer?

AIGISTHOS.

But since this to do thou thinkest — and not talk — thou soon shalt know!
Up then, comrades dear! the proper thing to do — not distant this!

CHOROS.

Up then! hilt in hold, his sword let every one aright dispose!

AIGISTHOS.

Ay, but I myself too, hilt in hold, do not refuse to die.

CHOROS.

Thou wilt die, thou say'st, to who accept it. We the chance demand.

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Nowise, O belovedest of men, may we do other ills!
To have reaped away these, even, is a harvest much to me.
Go, both thou and these the old men, to the homes appointed each,
Ere ye suffer! It behoved one do these things just as we did:
And if of these troubles there should be enough — we may assent
— By the Daimon's heavy heel unfortunately stricken ones!
So a woman's counsel hath it — if one judge it learning-worth.

AIGISTHOS.

But to think that these at me the idle tongue should thus o'erbloom,
And throw out such words — the Daimon's power experimenting on —
And, of modest knowledge missing, — me, the ruler, . . .

CHOROS.

Ne'er may this befall Argeians — wicked man to fawn before!

AIGISTHOS.

Anyhow, in after days, will I, yes, I, be at thee yet!

CHOROS.

Not if hither should the Daimon make Orestes straightway come!

AIGISTHOS.

O, I know, myself, that fugitives on hopes are pasture-fed!

CHOROS.

Do thy deed, get fat, defiling justice, since the power is thine!

AIGISTHOS.

Know that thou shalt give me satisfaction for this folly's sake!

CHOROS.

Boast on, bearing thee audacious, like a cock his females by!

KLUTAIMNESTRA.

Have not thou respect for these same idle yelpings! I and thou
Will arrange it, o'er this household ruling excellently well.

LA SAISIAZ.

1878.

I.

Good, to forgive;
Best, to forget!
Living, we fret;
Dying, we live.
Fretless and free,
Soul, clap thy pinion!
Earth have dominion,
Body, o'er thee!

II.

Wander at will,
Day after day, —
Wander away,
Wandering still —
Soul that canst soar!
Body may slumber:
Body shall cumber
Soul-flight no more.

III.

Waft of soul's wing!
What lies above?
Sunshine and Love,
Skyblue and Spring!

Body hides — where?
Ferns of all feather,
Mosses and heather,
Yours be the care!

A. E. S. SEPTEMBER 14, 1877.

DARED and done: at last I stand upon the summit,
Dear and True!
Singly dared and done; the climbing both of us were
bound to do.
Petty feat and yet prodigious: every side my glance
was bent
O'er the grandeur and the beauty lavished through the
whole ascent.
Ledge by ledge, out broke new marvels, now minute
and now immense:
Earth's most exquisite disclosure, heaven's own God in
evidence!
And no berry in its hiding, no blue space in its out-
spread,
Pleaded to escape my footstep, challenged my emerg-
ing head,
(As I climbed or paused from climbing, now o'er-
branched by shrub and tree,
Now built round by rock and boulder, now at just a
turn set free,
Stationed face to face with — Nature? rather with
Infinitude)
— No revealment of them all, as singly I my path
pursued,
But a bitter touched its sweetness, for the thought stung
"Even so
Both of us had loved and wondered just the same, five
days ago!"

Five short days, sufficient hardly to entice, from out its den
Splintered in the slab, this pink perfection of the cyclamen;
Scarce enough to heal and coat with amber gum the sloe-tree's gash,
Bronze the clustered wilding apple, redden ripe the mountain-ash:
Yet of might to place between us — Oh the barrier! Yon Profound
Shrinks beside it, proves a pin-point: barrier this, without a bound!
Boundless though it be, I reach you: somehow seem to have you here
— Who are there. Yes, there you dwell now, plain the four low walls appear;
Those are vineyards they enclose from; and the little spire which points
— That's Collonge, henceforth your dwelling. All the same, howe'er disjoints
Past from present, no less certain you are here, not there: have dared,
Done the feat of mountain-climbing, — five days since, we both prepared
Daring, doing, arm in arm, if other help should haply fail.
For you asked, as forth we sallied to see sunset from the vale,
"Why not try for once the mountain, — take a foretaste, snatch by stealth
Sight and sound, some unconsidered fragment of the hoarded wealth?
Six weeks at its base, yet never once have we together won

Sight or sound by honest climbing: let us two have dared and done
Just so much of twilight journey as may prove to-morrow's jaunt
Not the only mode of wayfare — wheeled to reach the eagle's haunt!"
So, we turned from the low grass-path you were pleased to call "your own,"
Set our faces to the rose-bloom o'er the summit's front of stone
Where Salève obtains, from Jura and the sunken sun she hides,
Due return of blushing "Good Night," rosy as a borne-off bride's,
For his masculine "Good Morrow" when, with sunrise still in hold,
Gay he hails her, and, magnific, thrilled her black length burns to gold.
Up and up we went, how careless — nay, how joyous! All was new,
All was strange. "Call progress toilsome? that were just insulting you!
How the trees must temper noontide! Ah, the thicket's sudden break!
What will be the morning glory, when at dusk thus gleams the lake?
Light by light puts forth Geneva: what a land — and of the land,
Can there be a lovelier station than this spot where now we stand?
Is it late, and wrong to linger? True, to-morrow makes amends.
Toilsome progress? child's play, call it — specially when one descends!

There, the dread descent is over — hardly our adventure, though!
Take the vale where late we left it, pace the grass-path, 'mine,' you know!
Proud completion of achievement!" And we paced it, praising still
That soft tread on velvet verdure as it wound through hill and hill;
And at very end there met us, coming from Collonge, the pair
— All our people of the Chalet — two, enough and none to spare.
So, we made for home together, and we reached it as the stars
One by one came lamping — chiefly that prepotency of Mars —
And your last word was "I owe you this enjoyment!" — met with "Nay:
With yourself it rests to have a month of morrows like to-day!"
Then the meal, with talk and laughter, and the news of that rare nook
Yet untroubled by the tourist, touched on by no travel-book,
All the same — though latent — patent, hybrid birth of land and sea,
And (our travelled friend assured you) — if such miracle might be —
Comparable for completeness of both blessings — all around
Nature, and, inside her circle, safety from world's sight and sound —
Comparable to our Saisiaz. "Hold it fast and guard it well!

Go and see and vouch for certain, then come back and never tell
Living soul but us; and haply, prove our sky from cloud as clear,
There may we four meet, praise fortune just as now, another year!"

Thus you charged him on departure: not without the final charge
"Mind to-morrow's early meeting! We must leave our journey marge
Ample for the wayside wonders: there's the stoppage at the inn
Three-parts up the mountain, where the hardships of the track begin;
There's the convent worth a visit; but, the triumph crowning all —
There's Salève's own platform facing glory which strikes greatness small,
— Blanc, supreme above his earth-brood, needles red and white and green,
Horns of silver, fangs of crystal set on edge in his demesne.
So, some three weeks since, we saw them: so, to-morrow we intend
You shall see them likewise; therefore Good Night till to-morrow, friend!"
Last, the nothings that extinguish embers of a vivid day:
"What might be the Marshal's next move, what Gambetta's counter-play?"
Till the landing on the staircase saw escape the latest spark:
"Sleep you well!" "Sleep but as well, you!" — lazy love quenched, all was dark.
Nothing dark next day at sundawn! Up I rose and forth I fared:

Took my plunge within the bath-pool, pacified the
watch-dog scared,
Saw proceed the transmutation — Jura's black to one
gold glow,
Trod your level path that let me drink the morning
deep and slow,
Reached the little quarry — ravage recompensed by
shrub and fern —
Till the overflowing ardors told me time was for return.
So, return I did, and gayly. But, for once, from no
far mound
Waved salute a tall white figure. "Has her sleep
been so profound?
Foresight, rather, prudent saving strength for day's
expenditure!
Ay, the chamber-window's open: out and on the
terrace, sure!"

No, the terrace showed no figure, tall, white, leaning
through the wreaths,
Tangle-twine of leaf and bloom that intercept the air
one breathes,
Interpose between one's love and Nature's loving, hill
and dale
Down to where the blue lake's wrinkle marks the
river's inrush pale
— Mazy Arve: whereon no vessel but goes sliding
white and plain,
Not a steamboat pants from harbor but one hears
pulsate amain,
Past the city's congregated peace of homes and pomp
of spires
— Man's mild protest that there's something more
than Nature, man requires,

And that, useful as is Nature to attract the tourist's foot,
Quiet slow sure money-making proves the matter's very root, —
Need for body, — while the spirit also needs a comfort reached
By no help of lake or mountain, but the texts whence Calvin preached.
"Here's the veil withdrawn from landscape: up to Jura and beyond,
All awaits us ranged and ready; yet she violates the bond,
Neither leans nor looks nor listens: why is this?" A turn of eye
Took the whole sole answer, gave the undisputed reason "why!"

This [illegible]ead way you had your summons! No premonitory touch,
As you talked and laughed ('t is told me) scarce a minute ere the clutch
Captured you in cold forever. Cold? nay, warm you were as life
When I raised you, while the others used, in passionate poor strife,
All the means that seemed to promise any aid, and all in vain.
Gone you were, and I shall never see that earnest face again
Grow transparent, grow transfigured with the sudden light that leapt,
At the first word's provocation, from the heart-deeps where it slept.

Therefore, paying piteous duty, what seemed You have we consigned

Peacefully to — what I think were, of all earth-beds, to your mind
Most the choice for quiet, yonder : low walls stop the vines' approach,
Lovingly Salève protects you ; village-sports will ne'er encroach
On the stranger lady's silence, whom friends bore so kind and well
Thither "just for love's sake," — such their own word was : and who can tell ?
You supposed that few or none had known and loved you in the world :
May be ! flower that 's full-blown tempts the butterfly, not flower that's furled.
But more learned sense unlocked you, loosed the sheath and let expand
Bud to bell and outspread flower-shape at the least warm touch of hand
— Maybe, throb of heart, beneath which, — quickening farther than it knew, —
Treasure oft was disembosomed, scent all strange and unguessed hue.
Disembosomed, re-embosomed, — must one memory suffice,
Prove I knew an Alpine-rose which all beside named Edelweiss ?

Rare thing, red or white, you rest now : two days slumbered through ; and since
One day more will see me rid of this same scene whereat I wince,
Tetchy at all sights and sounds and pettish at each idle charm
Proffered me who pace now singly where we two went arm in arm, —

I have turned upon my weakness: asked "And what, forsooth, prevents
That, this latest day allowed me, I fulfil of her intents
One she had the most at heart — that we should thus again survey
From Salève Mont Blanc together?" Therefore, — dared and done to-day
Climbing, — here I stand: but you — where?

If a spirit of the place
Broke the silence, bade me question, promised answer, — what disgrace
Did I stipulate "Provided answer suit my hopes, not fears!"
Would I shrink to learn my life-time's limit — days, weeks, months or years?
Would I shirk assurance on each point whereat I can but guess —
"Does the soul survive the body? Is there God's self, no or yes?"
If I know my mood, 't were constant — come in whatsoe'er uncouth
Shape it should, nay, formidable — so the answer were but truth.

Well, and wherefore shall it daunt me, when 'tis I myself am tasked,
When, by weakness weakness questioned, weakly answers — weakly asked?
Weakness never needs be falseness: truth is truth in each degree
— Thunderpealed by God to Nature, whispered by my soul to me.
Nay, the weakness turns to strength and triumphs in a truth beyond:

" Mine is but man's truest answer — how were it did
God respond ? "
I shall no more dare to mimic such response in futile
speech,
Pass off human lisp as echo of the sphere-song out of
reach,
Than, — because it well may happen yonder, where
the far snows blanch
Mute Mont Blanc, that who stands near them sees and
hears an avalanche, —
I shall pick a clod and throw, — cry " Such the sight
and such the sound !
What though I nor see nor hear them ? Others do,
the proofs abound ! "
Can I make my eye an eagle's, sharpen ear to recognize
Sound o'er league and league of silence ? Can I know,
who but surmise ?
If I dared no self-deception when, a week since, I and
you
Walked and talked along the grass-path, passing lightly
in review
What seemed hits and what seemed misses in a certain
fence-play, — strife
Sundry minds of mark engaged in " On the Soul and
Future Life," —
If I ventured estimating what was come of parried thrust,
Subtle stroke, and, rightly, wrongly, estimating could
be just
— Just, though life so seemed abundant in the form
which moved by mine,
I might well have played at feigning, fooling, — laughed
" What need opine
Pleasure must succeed to pleasure, else past pleasure
turns to pain,

And this first life claims a second, else I count its good no gain?"
Much less have I heart to palter when the matter to decide
Now becomes "Was ending ending once and always, when you died?"
Did the face, the form I lifted as it lay, reveal the loss
Not alone of life but soul? A tribute to yon flowers and moss,
What of you remains beside? A memory! Easy to attest
"Certainly from out the world that one believes who knew her best
Such was good in her, such fair, which fair and good were great perchance
Had but fortune favored, bidden each shy faculty advance;
After all — who knows another? Only as I know, I speak."
So much of you lives within me while I live my year or week.
Then my fellow takes the tale up, not unwilling to aver
Duly in his turn "I knew him best of all, as he knew her:
Such he was, and such he was not, and such other might have been
But that somehow every actor, somewhere in this earthly scene,
Fails." And so both memories dwindle, yours and mine together linked,
Till there is but left for comfort, when the last spark proves extinct,
This — that somewhere new existence led by men and women new

Possibly attains perfection coveted by me and you ;
While ourselves, the only witness to what work our life evolved,
Only to ourselves proposing problems proper to be solved
By ourselves alone, — who working ne'er shall know if work bear fruit
Others reap and garner, heedless how produced by stalk and root, —
We who, darkling, timed the day's birth, — struggling, testified to peace, —
Earned, by dint of failure, triumph, — we, creative thought, must cease
In created word, thought's echo, due to impulse long since sped !
Why repine ? There 's ever some one lives although ourselves be dead !

Well, what signifies repugnance ? Truth is truth howe'er it strike.
Fair or foul the lot apportioned life on earth, we bear alike.
Stalwart body idly yoked to stunted spirit, powers, that fain
Else would soar, condemned to grovel, groundlings through the fleshly chain, —
Help that hinders, hindrance proved but help disguised when all too late, —
Hindrance is the fact acknowledged, howsoe'er explained as Fate,
Fortune, Providence : we bear, own life a burthen more or less.
Life thus owned unhappy, is there supplemental happiness

Possible and probable in life to come? or must we count
Life a curse and not a blessing, summed-up in its whole amount,
Help and hindrance, joy and sorrow?
Why should I want courage here?
I will ask and have an answer, — with no favor, with no fear, —
From myself. How much, how little, do I inwardly believe
True that controverted doctrine? Is it fact to which I cleave,
Is it fancy I but cherish, when I take upon my lips
Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned, and declare the soul's eclipse
Not the soul's extinction? take his "I believe and I declare —
Certain am I — from this life I pass into a better, there
Where that lady lives of whom enamoured was my soul" — where this
Other lady, my companion dear and true, she also is?

I have questioned and am answered. Question, answer presuppose
Two points: that the thing itself which questions, answers, — *is*, it knows;
As it also knows the thing perceived outside itself, — a force
Actual ere its own beginning, operative through its course,
Unaffected by its end, — that this thing likewise needs must be;
Call this — God, then, call that — soul, and both — the only facts for me.

Prove them facts? that they o'erpass my power of proving, proves them such:
Fact it is I know I know not something which is fact as much.
What before caused all the causes, what effect of all effects
Haply follows, — these are fancy. Ask the rush if it suspects
Whence and how the stream which floats it had a rise, and where and how
Falls or flows on still! What answer makes the rush except that now
Certainly it floats and is, and, no less certain than itself,
Is the everyway external stream that now through shoal and shelf
Floats it onward, leaves it — may be — wrecked at last, or lands on shore
There to root again and grow and flourish stable evermore.
— May be! mere surmise not knowledge: much conjecture styled belief,
What the rush conceives the stream means through the voyage blind and brief.
Why, because I doubtless am, shall I as doubtless be?
"Because
God seems good and wise." Yet under this our life's apparent laws
Reigns a wrong which, righted once, would give quite other laws to life.
"He seems potent." Potent here, then: why are right and wrong at strife?
Has in life the wrong the better? Happily life ends so soon!
Right predominates in life? Then why two lives and double boon?

"Anyhow, we want it: wherefore want?" Because, without the want,
Life, now human, would be brutish: just that hope, however scant,
Makes the actual life worth leading; take the hope therein away,
All we have to do is surely not endure another day.
This life has its hopes for this life, hopes that promise joy: life done —
Out of all the hopes, how many had complete fulfilment? none.
"But the soul is not the body:" and the breath is not the flute;
Both together make the music: either marred and all is mute.
Truce to such old sad contention whence, according as we shape
Most of hope or most of fear, we issue in a half-escape:
"We believe" is sighed. I take the cup of comfort proffered thus,
Taste and try each soft ingredient, sweet infusion, and discuss
What their blending may accomplish for the cure or doubt, till — slow,
Sorrowful, but how decided! needs must I o'erturn it — so!
Cause before, effect behind me — blanks! The midway point I am,
Caused, itself — itself efficient: in that narrow space must cram
All experience — out of which there crowds conjecture manifold,

But, as knowledge, this comes only — things may be as I behold,
Or may not be, but, without me and above me, things there are ;
I myself am what I know not — ignorance which proves no bar
To the knowledge that I am, and, since I am, can recognize
What to me is pain and pleasure : this is sure, the rest — surmise.
If my fellows are or are not, what may please them and what pain, —
Mere surmise : my own experience — that is knowledge, once again !

I have lived, then, done and suffered, loved and hated, learnt and taught
This — there is no reconciling wisdom with a world distraught,
Goodness with triumphant evil, power with failure in the aim,
If — (to my own sense, remember ! though none other feel the same !) —
If you bar me from assuming earth to be a pupil's place,
And life, time, — with all their chances, changes, — just probation-space,
Mine, for me. But those apparent other mortals — theirs, for them ?
Knowledge stands on my experience : all outside its narrow hem,
Free surmise may sport and welcome ! Pleasures, pains affect mankind
Just as they affect myself? Why, here 's my neighbor color-blind,

Eyes like mine to all appearance: "green as grass" do
I affirm?
"Red as grass" he contradicts me: which employs the
proper term?
Were we two the earth's sole tenants, with no third
for referee,
How should I distinguish? Just so, God must judge
'twixt man and me.
To each mortal peradventure earth becomes a new
machine,
Pain and pleasure no more tally in our sense than red
and green;
Still, without what seems such mortal's pleasure, pain,
my life were lost
— Life, my whole sole chance to prove — although at
man's apparent cost —
What is beauteous and what ugly, right to strive for,
right to shun,
Fit to help and fit to hinder, — prove my forces every one,
Good and evil, — learn life's lesson, hate of evil, love
of good,
As 't is set me, understand so much as may be under-
stood —
Solve the problem: "From thine apprehended scheme
of things, deduce
Praise or blame of its contriver, shown a niggard or
profuse
In each good or evil issue! nor miscalculate alike
Counting one the other in the final balance, which to
strike,
Soul was born and life allotted: ay, the show of things
unfurled
For thy summing-up and judgment, — thine, no other
mortal's world!"

What though fancy scarce may grapple with the complex and immense
— "His own world for every mortal?" Postulate omnipotence!
Limit power, and simple grows the complex: shrunk to atom size,
That which loomed immense to fancy low before my reason lies, —
I survey it and pronounce it work like other work: success
Here and there, the workman's glory, — here and there, his shame no less,
Failure as conspicuous. Taunt not "Human work ape work divine?"
As the power, expect performance! God's be God's as mine is mine!
God whose power made man and made man's wants, and made, to meet those wants,
Heaven and earth which, through the body, prove the spirit's ministrants,
Excellently all, — did He lack power or was the will in fault
When He let blue heaven be shrouded o'er by vapors of the vault,
Gay earth drop her garlands shrivelled at the first infecting breath
Of the serpent pains which herald, swarming in, the dragon death?
What, no way but this that man may learn and lay to heart how rife
Life were with delights would only death allow their taste to life?
Must the rose sigh "Pluck — I perish!" must the eve weep "Gaze — I fade!"

— Every sweet warn "'Ware my bitter!" every
shine bid "Wait my shade"?
Can we love but on condition, that the thing we love
must die?
Needs there groan a world in anguish just to teach us
sympathy —
Multitudinously wretched that we, wretched too, may
guess
What a preferable state were universal happiness?
Hardly do I so conceive the outcome of that power
which went
To the making of the worm there in yon clod its
tenement,
Any more than I distinguish aught of that which, wise
and good,
Framed the leaf, its plain of pasture, dropped the dew,
its fineless food.
Nay, were fancy fact, were earth and all it holds
illusion mere,
Only a machine for teaching love and hate and hope
and fear
To myself, the sole existence, single truth mid false-
hood, — well!
If the harsh throes of the prelude die not off into the swell
Of that perfect piece they sting me to become a-strain
for, — if
Roughness of the long rock-clamber lead not to the
last of cliff,
First of level country where is sward my pilgrim-foot
can prize, —
Plainlier! if this life's conception new life fail to
realize, —
Though earth burst and proved a bubble glassing hues
of hell, one huge

Reflex of the devil's doings — God's work by no subterfuge —
(So death's kindly touch informed me as it broke the glamour, gave
Soul and body both release from life's long nightmare in the grave)
Still, — with no more Nature, no more Man as riddle to be read,
Only my own joys and sorrows now to reckon real instead, —
I must say — or choke in silence — "Howsoever came my fate,
Sorrow did and joy did nowise, — life well weighed, — preponderate."
By necessity ordained thus? I shall bear as best I can;
By a cause all-good, all-wise, all-potent? No, as I am man!
Such were God: and was it goodness that the good within my range
Or had evil in admixture or grew evil's self by change?
Wisdom — that becoming wise meant making slow and sure advance
From a knowledge proved in error to acknowledged ignorance?
Power? 't is just the main assumption reason most revolts at! power
Unavailing for bestowment on its creature of an hour,
Man, of so much proper action rightly aimed and reaching aim,
So much passion, — no defect there, no excess, but still the same, —
As what constitutes existence, pure perfection bright as brief

For yon worm, man's fellow-creature, on yon happier
world — its leaf!
No, as I am man, I mourn the poverty I must impute:
Goodness, wisdom, power, all bounded, each a human
attribute!

But, O world outspread beneath me! only for myself
I speak,
Nowise dare to play the spokesman for my brothers
strong and weak,
Full and empty, wise and foolish, good and bad, in
every age,
Every clime, I turn my eyes from, as in one or other stage
Of a torture writhe they, Job-like couched on dung
and crazed with blains
— Wherefore? whereto? ask the whirlwind what the
dread voice thence explains!
I shall "vindicate no way of God's to man," nor
stand apart,
"Laugh, be candid!" while I watch it traversing the
human heart.
Traversed heart must tell its story uncommented on:
no less
Mine results in "Only grant a second life, I acquiesce
In this present life as failure, count misfortune's worst
assaults
Triumph, not defeat, assured that loss so much the
more exalts
Gain about to be. For at what moment did I so
advance
Near to knowledge as when frustrate of escape from
ignorance?
Did not beauty prove most precious when its opposite
obtained

Rule, and truth seem more than ever potent because falsehood reigned?
While for love — Oh how but, losing love, does whoso loves succeed
By the death-pang to the birth-throe — learning what is love indeed?
Only grant my soul may carry high through death her cup unspilled,
Brimming though it be with knowledge, life's loss drop by drop distilled,
I shall boast it mine — the balsam, bless each kindly wrench that wrung
From life's tree its inmost virtue, tapped the root whence pleasure sprung,
Barked the bole, and broke the bough, and bruised the berry, left all grace
Ashes in death's stern alembic, loosed elixir in its place!

Witness, Dear and True, how little I was 'ware of— not your worth
— That I knew, my heart assures me — but of what a shade on earth
Would the passage from my presence of the tall white figure throw
O'er the ways we walked together! Somewhat narrow, somewhat slow
Used to seem the ways, the walking: narrow ways are well to tread
When there 's moss beneath the footstep, honeysuckle overhead:
Walking slow to beating bosom surest solace soonest gives,
Liberates the brain o'erloaded — best of all restoratives.

Nay, do I forget the open vast where soon or late converged
Ways though winding? — world-wide heaven-high sea where music slept or surged
As the angel had ascendant, and Beethoven's Titan mace
Smote the immense to storm Mozart would by a finger's lifting chase?
Yes, I knew — but not with knowledge such as thrills me while I view
Yonder precinct which henceforward holds and hides the Dear and True.
Grant me (once again) assurance we shall each meet each some day,
Walk — but with how bold a footstep! on a way — but what a way!
— Worst were best, defeat were triumph, utter loss were utmost gain. 389
Can it be, and must, and will it?

Silence! Out of fact's domain,
Just surmise prepared to mutter hope, and also fear — dispute
Fact's inexorable ruling "Outside fact, surmise be mute!"
Well!
Ay, well and best, if fact's self I may force the answer from!
'T is surmise I stop the mouth of. Not above in yonder dome
All a rapture with its rose-glow, — not around, where pile and peak
Strainingly await the sun's fall, — not beneath, where crickets creak,

Birds assemble for their bed-time, soft the tree-top swell subsides, —
No, nor yet within my deepest sentient self the knowledge hides.
Aspiration, reminiscence, plausibilities of trust
— Now the ready "Man were wronged else," now the rash "and God unjust" —
None of these I need. Take thou, my soul, thy solitary stand,
Umpire to the champions Fancy, Reason, as on either hand
Amicable war they wage and play the foe in thy behoof!
Fancy thrust and Reason parry! Thine the prize who stand aloof.

FANCY.

I concede the thing refused: henceforth no certainty more plain
Than this mere surmise that after body dies soul lives again.
Two, the only facts acknowledged late, are now increased to three —
God is, and the soul is, and, as certain, after death shall be.
Put this third to use in life, the time for using fact!

REASON.

I do:
Find it promises advantage, coupled with the other two.
Life to come will be improvement on the life that 's now; destroy
Body's thwartings, there 's no longer screen betwixt soul and soul's joy.
Why should we expect new hindrance, novel tether? In this first

Life, I see the good of evil, why our world began at worst:
Since time means amelioration, tardily enough displayed,
Yet a mainly onward moving, never wholly retrograde.
We know more though we know little, we grow stronger though still weak,
Partly see though all too purblind, stammer though we cannot speak.
There is no such grudge in God as scared the ancient Greek, no fresh
Substitute of trap for dragnet, once a breakage in the mesh.
Dragons were, and serpents are, and blind-worms will be: ne'er emerged
Any new-created python for man's plague since earth was purged.
Failing proof, then, of invented trouble to replace the old,
O'er this life the next presents advantage much and manifold:
Which advantage — in the absence of a fourth and farther fact
Now conceivably surmised, of harm to follow from the act —
I pronounce for man's obtaining at this moment. Why delay?
Is he happy? happiness will change: anticipate the day!
Is he sad? there's ready refuge: of all sadness death's prompt cure!
Is he both, in mingled measure? cease a burthen to endure!
Pains with sorry compensations, pleasures stinted in the dole,
Power that sinks and pettiness that soars, all halved and nothing whole,

Idle hopes that lure man onward, forced back by as
idle fears —
What a load he stumbles under through his glad sad
seventy years,
When a touch sets right the turmoil, lifts his spirit
where, flesh-freed,
Knowledge shall be rightly named so, all that seems be
truth indeed !
Grant his forces no accession, nay, no faculty's increase,
Only let what now exists continue. let him prove in
peace
Power whereof the interrupted unperfected play enticed
Man through darkness, which to lighten any spark of
hope sufficed, —
What shall then deter his dying out of darkness into light ?
Death itself perchance, brief pain that 's pang, con-
densed and infinite ?
But at worst, he needs must brave it one day, while,
at best, he laughs —
Drops a. drop within his chalice, sleep not death his
science quaffs !
Any moment claims more courage when, by crossing
cold and gloom,
Manfully man quits discomfort, makes for the provided
room
Where the old friends want their fellow, where the
new acquaintance wait,
Probably for talk assembled, possibly to sup in state !
I affirm and re-affirm it therefore : only make as plain
As that man now lives, that, after dying, man will live
again, —
Make as plain the absence, also, of a law to contravene
Voluntary passage from this life to that by change of
scene, —

And I bid him — at suspicion of first cloud athwart his sky,
Flower's departure, frost's arrival — never hesitate, but die!

FANCY.

Then I double my concession: grant, along with new life sure,
This same law found lacking now: ordain that, whether rich or poor
Present life is judged in aught man counts advantage — be it hope,
Be it fear that brightens, blackens most or least his horoscope, —
He, by absolute compulsion such as made him live at all,
Go on living to the fated end of life whate'er befall.
What though, as on earth he darkling grovels, man descry the sphere,
Next life's — call it, heaven of freedom, close above and crystal-clear?
He shall find — say, hell to punish who in aught curtails the term,
Fain would act the butterfly before he has played out the worm.
God, soul, earth, heaven, hell, — five facts now: what is to desiderate?

REASON.

Nothing! Henceforth man's existence bows to the monition "Wait!
Take the joys and bear the sorrows — neither with extreme concern!
Living here means nescience simply: 't is next life that helps to learn.

Shut those eyes, next life will open, — stop those ears, next life will teach
Hearing's office, — close those lips, next life will give the power of speech!
Or, if action more amuse thee than the passive attitude,
Bravely bustle through thy being, busy thee for ill or good,
Reap this life's success or failure! Soon shall things be unperplexed
And the right and wrong, now tangled, lie unravelled in the next."

FANCY.

Not so fast! Still more concession! not alone do I declare
Life must needs be borne, — I also will that man become aware
Life has worth incalculable, every moment that he spends
So much gain or loss for that next life which on this life depends.
Good, done here, be there rewarded, — evil, worked here, there amerced!
Six facts now, and all established, plain to man the last as first.

REASON.

There was good and evil, then, defined to man by this decree?
Was — for at its promulgation both alike have ceased to be.
Prior to this last announcement "Certainly as God exists,
As He made man's soul, as soul is quenchless by the deathly mists,

Yet is, all the same, forbidden premature escape from time
To eternity's provided purer air and brighter clime, —
Just so certainly depends it on the use to which man turns
Earth, the good or evil done there, whether after death he earns
Life eternal, — heaven, the phrase be, or eternal death, — say, hell.
As his deeds, so proves his portion, doing ill or doing well ! "
— Prior to this last announcement, earth was man's probation-place :
Liberty of doing evil gave his doing good a grace ;
Once lay down the law, with Nature's simple " Such effects succeed
Causes such, and heaven or hell depends upon man's earthly deed
Just as surely as depends the straight or else the crooked line
On his making point meet point or with or else without incline," —
Thenceforth neither good nor evil does man, doing what he must.
Lay but down that law as stringent " Wouldst thou live again, be just ! "
As this other " Wouldst thou live now, regularly draw thy breath !
For, suspend the operation, straight law's breach results in death — "
And (provided always, man, addressed this mode, be sound and sane)
Prompt and absolute obedience, never doubt, will law obtain !
Tell not me " Look round us ! nothing each side but acknowledged law,

Now styled God's — now, Nature's edict!" Where 's
obedience without flaw
Paid to either? What 's the adage rife in man's
mouth? Why, "The best
I both see and praise, the worst I follow" — which,
despite professed
Seeing, praising, all the same he follows, since he
disbelieves
In the heart of him that edict which for truth his head
receives.
There 's evading and persuading and much making law
amends
Somehow, there 's the nice distinction 'twixt fast foes
and faulty friends,
— Any consequence except inevitable death when "Die,
Whoso breaks our law!" they publish, God and
Nature equally.
Law that 's kept or broken — subject to man's will and
pleasure! Whence?
How comes law to bear eluding? Not because of
impotence:
Certain laws exist already which to hear means to obey;
Therefore not without a purpose these man must, while
those man may
Keep and, for the keeping, haply gain approval and
reward.
Break through this last superstructure, all is empty air
— no sward
Firm like my first fact to stand on "God there is, and
soul there is,"
And soul's earthly life-allotment: wherein, by hy-
pothesis,
Soul is bound to pass probation, prove its powers, and
exercise

Sense and thought on fact, and then, from fact educing fit surmise,
Ask itself, and of itself have solely answer, "Does the scope
Earth affords of fact to judge by warrant future fear or hope?"

Thus have we come back full circle: fancy's footsteps one by one
Go their round conducting reason to the point where they begun,
Left where we were left so lately, Dear and True! When, half a week
Since, we walked and talked and thus I told you, how suffused a cheek
You had turned me had I sudden brought the blush into the smile
By some word like "Idly argued! you know better all the while!"
Now, from me — Oh not a blush but, how much more, a joyous glow,
Laugh triumphant, would it strike did your "Yes, better I do know"
Break, my warrant for assurance! which assurance may not be
If, supplanting hope, assurance needs must change this life to me.
So, I hope — no more than hope, but hope — no less than hope, because
I can fathom, by no plumb-line sunk in 'ife's apparent laws,
How I may in any instance fix where change should meetly fall
Nor involve, by one revisal, abrogation of them all:

— Which again involves as utter change in life thus
law-released,
Whence the good of goodness vanished when the ill
of evil ceased.
Whereas, life and laws apparent re-instated, — all we
know,
All we know not, — o'er our heaven again cloud
closes, until, lo —
Hope the arrowy, just as constant, comes to pierce its
gloom, compelled
By a power and by a purpose which, if no one else
beheld,
I behold in life, so — hope!

Sad summing-up of all to say!
Athanasius contra mundum, why should he hope more
than they?
So are men made notwithstanding, such magnetic virtue
darts
From each head their fancy haloes to their unresisting
hearts!

Here I stand, methinks a stone's throw from yon vil-
lage I this morn
Traversed for the sake of looking one last look at its
forlorn
Tenement's ignoble fortune: through a crevice, plain
its floor
Piled with provender for cattle, while a dung-heap
blocked the door.
In that squalid Bossex, under that obscene red roof, arose,
Like a fiery flying serpent from its egg, a soul —
Rousseau's.
Turn thence! Is it Diodati joins the glimmer of the
lake?

There I plucked a leaf, one week since, — ivy, plucked
for Byron's sake.
Famed unfortunates ! And yet, because of that phos-
phoric fame
Swathing blackness' self with brightness till putridity
looked flame,
All the world was witched : and wherefore ? what
could lie beneath, allure
Heart of man to let corruption serve man's head as
cynosure ?
Was the magic in the dictum " All that 's good is gone
and past ;
Bad and worse still grows the present, and the worst
of all comes last :
Which believe — for I believe it ?" So preached one
his gospel-news ;
While melodious moaned the other " Dying day with
dolphin-hues !
Storm, for loveliness and darkness like a woman's eye !
Ye mounts
Where I climb to 'scape my fellow, and thou sea
wherein he counts
Not one inch of vile dominion ! What were your
especial worth
Failed ye to enforce the maxim ' Of all objects found
on earth
Man is meanest, much too honored when compared
with — what by odds
Beats him — any dog : so, let him go a-howling to his
gods ! '
Which believe — for I believe it ! " such the comfort
man received
Sadly since perforce he must : for why ? the famous
bard believed !

Fame! Then, give me fame, a moment! As I gather at a glance
Human glory after glory vivifying yon expanse,
Let me grasp them all together, hold on high and brandish well
Beacon-like above the rapt world ready, whether heaven or hell
Send the dazzling summons earthward, to submit itself the same,
Take on trust the hope or else despair flashed full on face by — Fame!
Thanks, thou pine-tree of Makistos, wide thy giant torch I wave!
Know ye whence I plucked the pillar, late with sky for architrave?
This the trunk, the central solid Knowledge, kindled core, began
Tugging earth-deeps, trying heaven-heights, rooted yonder at Lausanne.
This which flits and spits, the aspic, — sparkles in and out the boughs
Now, and now condensed, the python, coiling round and round allows
Scarce the bole its due effulgence, dulled by flake on flake of Wit —
Laughter so bejewels Learning, — what but Ferney nourished it?
Nay, nor fear — since every resin feeds the flame — that I dispense
With yon Bossex terebinth-tree's all-explosive Eloquence:
No, be sure! nor, any more than thy resplendency, Jean-Jacques,
Dare I want thine, Diodati! What though monkeys and macaques

Gibber "Byron"? Byron's ivy rears a branch beyond
the crew,
Green forever, no deciduous trash macaques and
monkeys chew!
As Rousseau, then, eloquent, as Byron prime in poet's
power, —
Detonations, fulgurations, smiles — the rainbow, tears
— the shower, —
Lo, I lift the coruscating marvel — Fame! and,
famed, declare
— Learned for the nonce as Gibbon, witty as wit's
self Voltaire . . .
O the sorriest of conclusions to whatever man of sense
Mid the millions stands the unit, takes no flare for
evidence!
Yet the millions have their portion, live their calm or
troublous day,
Find significance in fireworks: so, by help of mine,
they may
Confidently lay to heart and lock in head their life long
— this:
"He there with the brand flamboyant, broad o'er
night's forlorn abyss,
Crowned by prose and verse; and wielding, with
Wit's bauble, Learning's rod . . .
Well? Why, he at least believed in Soul, was very
sure of God."

So the poor smile played, that evening: pallid smile
long since extinct
Here in London's mid-November! Not so loosely
thoughts were linked,
Six weeks since as I, descending in the sunset from
Salève,

Found the chain, I seemed to forge there, flawless till
it reached your grave, —
Not so filmy was the texture, but I bore it in my
breast
Safe thus far. And since I found a something in me
would not rest
Till I, link by link, unravelled any tangle of the chain,
— Here it lies, for much or little! I have lived all
o'er again
That last pregnant hour: I saved it, just as I could
save a root
Disinterred for re-interment when the time best helps
to shoot.
Life is stocked with germs of torpid life; but may I
never wake
Those of mine whose resurrection could not be without
earthquake!
Rest all such, unraised forever! Be this, sad yet sweet,
the sole
Memory evoked from slumber! Least part this: then
what the whole?

DRAMATIC IDYLS.

FIRST SERIES.

1879.

MARTIN RELPH.

My grandfather says he remembers he saw, when a youngster long ago,
On a bright May day, a strange old man, with a beard as white as snow,
Stand on the hill outside our town like a monument of woe,
And, striking his bare bald head the while, sob out the reason — so!

If I last as long as Methuselah I shall never forgive myself:
But — God forgive me, that I pray, unhappy Martin Relph,
As coward, coward I call him — him, yes, him! Away from me!
Get you behind the man I am now, you man that I used to be!

What can have sewed my mouth up, set me a-stare, all eyes, no tongue?
People have urged "You visit a scare too hard on a lad so young!
You were taken aback, poor boy," they urge, "no time to regain your wits:
Besides it had maybe cost you life." Ay, there is the cap which fits!

So, cap me, the coward, — thus! No fear! A cuff
on the brow does good:
The feel of it hinders a worm inside which bores at
the brain for food.
See now, there certainly seems excuse: for a moment,
I trust, dear friends,
The fault was but folly, no fault of mine, or if mine, I
have made amends!

For, every day that is first of May, on the hill-top,
here stand I,
Martin Relph, and I strike my brow, and publish the
reason why,
When there gathers a crowd to mock the fool. No
fool, friends, since the bite
Of a worm inside is worse to bear: pray God I have
balked him quite!

I'll tell you. Certainly much excuse! It came of
the way they cooped
Us peasantry up in a ring just here, close huddling
because tight-hooped
By the red-coats round us villagers all: they meant we
should see the sight
And take the example, — see, not speak, for speech
was the Captain's right.

"You clowns on the slope, beware!" cried he:
"This woman about to die
Gives by her fate fair warning to such acquaintance as
play the spy.
Henceforth who meddle with matters of state above
them perhaps will learn
That peasants should stick to their plough-tail, leave to
the King the King's concern.

"Here's a quarrel that sets the land on fire, between
King George and his foes:
What call has a man of your kind — much less, a
woman — to interpose?
Yet you needs must be meddling, folk like you, not
foes — so much the worse!
The many and loyal should keep themselves unmixed
with the few perverse.

"Is the counsel hard to follow? I gave it you plainly
a month ago,
And where was the good? The rebels have learned
just all that they need to know.
Not a month since in we quietly marched: a week,
and they had the news,
From a list complete of our rank and file to a note of
our caps and shoes.

"All about all we did and all we were doing and like
to do!
Only, I catch a letter by luck, and capture who wrote
it, too.
Some of you men look black enough, but the milk-
white face demure
Betokens the finger foul with ink: 't is a woman who
writes, be sure!

"Is it 'Dearie, how much I miss your mouth!' —
good natural stuff, she pens?
Some sprinkle of that, for a blind, of course: with
talk about cocks and hens,
How 'robin has built on the apple-tree, and our
creeper which came to grief
Through the frost, we feared, is twining afresh round
casement in famous leaf.'

"But all for a blind! She soon glides frank into
'Horrid the place is grown
With Officers here and Privates there, no nook we may
call our own:
And Farmer Giles has a tribe to house, and lodging
will be to seek
For the second Company sure to come ('t is whispered)
on Monday week.'

"And so to the end of the chapter! There! The
murder, you see, was out:
Easy to guess how the change of mind in the rebels
was brought about!
Safe in the trap would they now lie snug, had treachery
made no sign:
But treachery meets a just reward, no matter if fools
malign!

"That traitors had played us false, was proved — sent
news which fell so pat:
And the murder was out — this letter of love, the
sender of this sent that!
'T is an ugly job, though, all the same — a hateful, to
have to deal
With a case of the kind, when a woman 's in fault:
we soldiers need nerves of steel!

"So, I gave her a chance, despatched post-haste a
message to Vincent Parkes
Whom she wrote to; easy to find he was, since one
of the King's own clerks,
Ay, kept by the King's own gold in the town close
by where the rebels camp:
A sort of a lawyer, just the man to betray our sort —
the scamp!

"'If her writing is simple and honest and only the
lover-like stuff it looks,
And if you yourself are a loyalist, nor down in the
rebels' books,
Come quick,' said I, 'and in person prove you are
each of you clear of crime,
Or martial law must take its course: this day next
week's the time!'

"Next week is now: does he come? Not he!
Clean gone, our clerk, in a trice!
He has left his sweetheart here in the lurch: no need
of a warning twice!
His own neck free, but his partner's fast in the noose
still, here she stands
To pay for her fault. 'T is an ugly job: but soldiers
obey commands.

"And hearken wherefore I make a speech! Should
any acquaintance share
The folly that led to the fault that is now to be
punished, let fools beware!
Look black, if you please, but keep hands white: and,
above all else, keep wives —
Or sweethearts or what they may be — from ink!
Not a word now, on your lives!"

Black? but the Pit's own pitch was white to the
Captain's face — the brute
With the bloated cheeks and the bulgy nose and the
bloodshot eyes to suit!
He was muddled with wine, they say: more like, he
was out of his wits with fear;
He had but a handful of men, that's true, — a riot
might cost him dear.

And all that time stood Rosamund Page, with pinioned arms and face
Bandaged about, on the turf marked out for the party's firing-place.
I hope she was wholly with God: I hope 't was His angel stretched a hand
To steady her so, like the shape of stone you see in our church-aisle stand.

I hope there was no vain fancy pierced the bandage to vex her eyes,
No face within which she missed without, no questions and no replies —
"Why did you leave me to die?" — "Because . . ."
Oh, fiends, too soon you grin
At merely a moment of hell, like that — such heaven as hell ended in!

Let mine end too! He gave the word, up went the guns in a line.
Those heaped on the hill were blind as dumb, — for, of all eyes, only mine
Looked over the heads of the foremost rank. Some fell on their knees in prayer,
Some sank to the earth, but all shut eyes, with a sole exception there.

That was myself, who had stolen up last, had sidled behind the group:
I am highest of all on the hill-top, there stand fixed while the others stoop!
From head to foot in a serpent's twine am I tightened: *I* touch ground?
No more than a gibbet's rigid corpse which the fetters rust around!

Can I speak, can I breathe, can I burst — aught else
but see, see, only see?
And see I do — for there comes in sight — a man, it
sure must be! —
Who staggeringly, stumblingly rises, falls, rises, at
random flings his weight
On and on, anyhow onward — a man that's mad he
arrives too late!

Else why does he wave a something white high-
flourished above his head?
Why does not he call, cry, — curse the fool! — why
throw up his arms instead?
O take this fist in your own face, fool! Why does
not yourself shout "Stay!
Here's a man comes rushing, might and main, with
something he's mad to say"?

And a minute, only a moment, to have hell-fire boil
up in your brain,
And ere you can judge things right, choose heaven, —
time's over, repentance vain!
They level: a volley, a smoke and the clearing of
smoke: I see no more
Of the man smoke hid, nor his frantic arms, nor the
something white he bore.

But stretched on the field, some half-mile off, is an
object. Surely dumb,
Deaf, blind were we struck, that nobody heard, not
one of us saw him come!
Has he fainted through fright? One may well believe!
What is it he holds so fast?
Turn him over, examine the face! Heyday! What,
Vincent Parkes at last?

Dead ! dead as she, by the self-same shot : one bullet has ended both,
Her in the body and him in the soul. They laugh at our plighted troth.
"Till death us do part ?" Till death us do join past parting — that sounds like
Betrothal indeed ! O Vincent Parkes, what need has my fist to strike ?

I helped you : thus were you dead and wed : one bound, and your soul reached hers !
There is clenched in your hand the thing, signed, sealed, the paper which plain avers
She is innocent, innocent, plain as print, with the King's Arms broad engraved :
No one can hear, but if any one high on the hill can see, she 's saved !

And torn his garb and bloody his lips with heart-break — plain it grew
How the week's delay had been brought about : each guess at the end proved true.
It was hard to get at the folk in power : such waste of time ! and then
Such pleading and praying, with, all the while, his lamb in the lions' den !

And at length when he wrung their pardon out, no end to the stupid forms —
The license and leave : I make no doubt — what wonder if passion warms
The pulse in a man if you play with his heart ? — he was something hasty in speech ;
Anyhow, none would quicken the work : he had to beseech, beseech !

And the thing once signed, sealed, safe in his grasp, —
what followed but fresh delays ?
For the floods were out, he was forced to take such a
roundabout of ways !
And 't was " Halt there ! " at every turn of the road,
since he had to cross the thick
Of the red-coats : what did they care for him and his
" Quick, for God's sake, quick ! "

Horse ? but he had one : had it how long ? till the
first knave smirked " You brag
Yourself a friend of the King's ? then lend to a King's
friend here your nag ! "
Money to buy another ? Why, piece by piece they
plundered him still,
With their " Wait you must, — no help : if aught
can help you, a guinea will ! "

And a borough there was — I forget the name — whose
Mayor must have the bench
Of Justices ranged to clear a doubt : for " Vincent,"
thinks he, sounds French !
It well may have driven him daft, God knows ! all
man can certainly know
Is — rushing and falling and rising, at last he arrived
in a horror — so !

When a word, cry, gasp, would have rescued both !
Ay bite me ! The worm begins
At his work once more. Had cowardice proved —
that only — my sin of sins !
Friends, look you here ! Suppose . . . suppose . . .
But mad I am, needs must be !
Judas the Damned would never have dared such a sin
as I dream ! For, see !

Suppose I had sneakingly loved her myself, my wretched self, and dreamed
In the heart of me "She were better dead than happy and his!" — while gleamed
A light from hell as I spied the pair in a perfectest embrace,
He the saviour and she the saved, — bliss born of the very murder-place!

No! Say I was scared, friends! Call me fool and coward, but nothing worse!
Jeer at the fool and gibe at the coward! 'T was ever the coward's curse
That fear breeds fancies in such: such take their shadow for substance still,
— A fiend at their back. I liked poor Parkes, — loved Vincent, if you will!

And her — why, I said "Good morrow" to her, "Good even," and nothing more:
The neighborly way! She was just to me as fifty had been before.
So, coward it is and coward shall be! There's a friend, now! Thanks! A drink
Of water I wanted: and now I can walk, get home by myself, I think.

PHEIDIPPIDES.

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν.

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
Gods of my birthplace, dæmons and heroes, honor to all!
Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in praise
— Ay, with Zeus the Defender, with Her of the ægis and spear!
Also, ye of the bow and the buskin, praised be your peer,
Now, henceforth and forever, — O latest to whom I upraise
Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and flock!
Present to help, potent to save, Pan — patron I call!

Archons of Athens, topped by the tettix, see, I return!
See, 't is myself here standing alive, no spectre that speaks!
Crowned with the myrtle, did you command me, Athens and you,
"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
Persia has come, we are here, where is She?" Your command I obeyed,
Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs through,
Was the space between city and city: two days, two nights did I burn
Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for "Persia has come!
Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute, water and earth;
Razed to the ground is Eretria — but Athens, shall Athens sink,
Drop into dust and die — the flower of Hellas utterly die,
Die, with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the stander-by?
Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er destruction's brink?
How, — when? No care for my limbs! — there's lightning in all and some —
Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"
O my Athens — Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond?
Every face of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
Malice, — each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I stood
Quivering, — the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch from dry wood:
"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate?
Thunder, thou Zeus! Athené, are Spartans a quarry beyond
Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis, clang them 'Ye must'!"

No bolt launched from Olumpos! Lo, their answer at last!

"Has Persia come, — does Athens ask aid, — may Sparta befriend?
Nowise precipitate judgment — too weighty the issue at stake!
Count we no time lost time which lags through respect to the Gods!
Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare, whatever the odds
In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to take
Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it fast:
Athens must wait, patient as we — who judgment suspend."
Athens, — except for that sparkle, — thy name, I had mouldered to ash!
That sent a blaze through my blood; off, off and away was I back,
— Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the vile!
Yet "O Gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them again,
"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you erewhile?
Vain was the filleted victim, the fulsome libation! Too rash
Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!
"Oak and olive and bay, — I bid you cease to enwreathe
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot,

You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a slave !
Rather I hail thee, Parnes, — trust to thy wild waste tract !
Treeless, herbless, lifeless mountain ! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure ? at least I can breathe,
Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute ! ”

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge ;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right ! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure across :
“ Where I could enter, there I depart by ! Night in the fosse ?
Athens to aid ? Though the dive were through Erebos, thus I obey —
Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise ! No bridge
Better ! ” — when — ha ! what was it I came on, of wonders that are ?

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he — majestical Pan !
Ivy drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his hoof :
All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly — the curl

Carved on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe,
As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
"Halt, Pheidippides!" — halt I did, my brain of a whirl:
"Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious began:
"How is it, — Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?

"Athens, she only, rears me no fane, makes me no feast!
Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of old?
Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me!
Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God saith:
When Persia — so much as strews not the soil — is cast in the sea,
Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and least,
Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and the bold!'

"Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place, be the pledge!'"
(Gay, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
— Fennel — I grasped it a-tremble with dew — whatever it bode)
"While, as for thee . . ." But enough! He was gone. If I ran hitherto —

Be sure that, the rest of my journey, I ran no longer, but flew.
Parnes to Athens — earth no more, the air was my road:
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's edge!
Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon rare!

Then spoke Miltiades. "And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed, — what gift is promised thyself?
Tell it us straightway, — Athens the mother demands of her son!"
Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest of his strength
Into the utterance — "Pan spoke thus: 'For what thou hast done
Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee release
From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!'

"I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may grow, —
Pound — Pan helping us — Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away forever; and then, — no Athens to save, —

Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave, —
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees, — recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full — rewarding him — so!"

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon day:
So, when Persia was dust, all cried "To Akropolis!
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the mead is thy due!
'Athens is saved, thank Pan,' go shout!" He flung down his shield,
Ran like fire once more: and the space 'twixt the Fennel-field
And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through,
Till in he broke: "Rejoice, we conquer!" Like wine through clay,
Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died — the bliss!

So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
Is still "Rejoice!" — his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
So is Pheidippides happy forever, — the noble strong man
Who could race like a God, bear the face of a God, whom a God loved so well;
He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,

So to end gloriously — once to shout, thereafter be mute:
"Athens is saved!" — Pheidippides dies in the shout
for his meed.

HALBERT AND HOB.

Here is a thing that happened. Like wild beasts
whelped, for den,
In a wild part of North England, there lived once two
wild men
Inhabiting one homestead, neither a hovel nor hut,
Time out of mind their birthright: father and son,
these — but —
Such a son, such a father! Most wildness by degrees
Softens away: yet, last of their line, the wildest and
worst were these.

Criminals, then? Why, no: they did not murder
and rob;
But, give them a word, they returned a blow — old
Halbert as young Hob:
Harsh and fierce of word, rough and savage of deed,
Hated or feared the more — who knows? — the
genuine wild-beast breed.

Thus were they found by the few sparse folk of the
country-side;
But how fared each with other? E'en beasts couch,
hide by hide,
In a growling, grudged agreement: so, father and son
aye curled
The closelier up in their den because the last of their
kind in the world.

Still, beast irks beast on occasion. One Christmas night of snow,
Came father and son to words — such words! more cruel because the blow
To crown each word was wanting, while taunt matched gibe, and curse
Competed with oath in wager, like pastime in hell, — nay, worse:
For pastime turned to earnest, as up there sprang at last
The son at the throat of the father, seized him and held him fast.

"Out of this house you go!" — (there followed a hideous oath) —
"This oven where now we bake, too hot to hold us both!
If there 's snow outside, there 's coolness: out with you, bide a spell
In the drift and save the sexton the charge of a parish shell!"

Now, the old trunk was tough, was solid as stump of oak
Untouched at the core by a thousand years: much less had its seventy broke
One whipcord nerve in the muscly mass from neck to shoulder-blade
Of the mountainous man, whereon his child's rash hand like a feather weighed.

Nevertheless at once did the mammoth shut his eyes,
Drop chin to breast, drop hands to sides, stand stiffened — arms and thighs
All of a piece — struck mute, much as a sentry stands,
Patient to take the enemy's fire: his captain so commands.

Whereat the son's wrath flew to fury at such sheer scorn
Of his puny strength by the giant eld thus acting the babe new-born :
And "Neither will this turn serve!" yelled he. "Out with you! Trundle, log!
If you cannot tramp and trudge like a man, try all-fours like a dog!"

Still the old man stood mute. So, logwise, — down to floor
Pulled from his fireside place, dragged on from hearth to door, —
Was he pushed, a very log, staircase along, until
A certain turn in the steps was reached, a yard from the house-door-sill.

Then the father opened eyes — each spark of their rage extinct, —
Temples, late black, dead-blanched, — right-hand with left-hand linked, —
He faced his son submissive ; when slow the accents came,
They were strangely mild though his son's rash hand on his neck lay all the same.

"Hob, on just such a night of a Christmas long ago,
For such a cause, with such a gesture, did I drag — so —
My father down thus far: but, softening here, I heard
A voice in my heart, and stopped: you wait for an outer word.

"For your own sake, not mine, soften you too! Untrod
Leave this last step we reach, nor brave the finger of God!

I dared not pass its lifting : I did well. I nor blame
Nor praise you. I stopped here : and, Hob, do you
the same ! '

Straightway the son relaxed his hold of the father's
throat.
They mounted, side by side, to the room again : no note
Took either of each, no sign made each to either : last
As first, in absolute silence, their Christmas-night they
passed.

At dawn, the father sate on, dead, in the self-same
place,
With an outburst blackening still the old bad fighting-
face :
But the son crouched all a-tremble like any lamb new-
yeaned.

When he went to the burial, some one's staff he bor-
rowed — tottered and leaned.
But his lips were loose, not locked, — kept muttering,
mumbling. "There !
At his cursing and swearing !" the youngsters cried :
but the elders thought "In prayer."
A boy threw stones : he picked them up and stored
them in his vest.

So tottered, muttered, mumbled he, till he died, per-
haps found rest.
"Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts ?"
O Lear,
That a reason out of nature must turn them soft, seems
clear !

IVÀN IVÀNOVITCH.

"THEY tell me, your carpenters," quoth I to my friend the Russ,
"Make a simple hatchet serve as a tool-box serves with us.
Arm but each man with his axe, 't is a hammer and saw and plane
And chisel, and — what know I else? We should imitate in vain
The mastery wherewithal, by a flourish of just the adze,
He cleaves, clamps, dovetails in, — no need of our nails and brads, —
The manageable pine: 'tis said he could shave himself
With the axe, — so all adroit, now a giant and now an elf,
Does he work and play at once!"
Quoth my friend the Russ to me,
"Ay, that and more beside on occasion! It scarce may be
You never heard tell a tale told children, time out of mind,
By father and mother and nurse, for a moral that's behind,
Which children quickly seize. If the incident happened at all,
We place it in Peter's time when hearts were great not small,
Germanized, Frenchified. I wager 't is old to you
As the story of Adam and Eve, and possibly quite as true."

In the deep of our land, 't is said, a village from out the woods

Emerged on the great main-road 'twixt two great solitudes.
Through forestry right and left, black verst and verst of pine,
From village to village runs the road's long wide bare line.
Clearance and clearance break the else-unconquered growth
Of pine and all that breeds and broods there, leaving loth
Man's inch of masterdom, — spot of life, spirit of fire, —
To star the dark and dread, lest right and rule expire
Throughout the monstrous wild, a-hungered to resume
Its ancient sway, suck back the world into its womb:
Defrauded by man's craft which clove from North to South
This highway broad and straight e'en from the Neva's mouth
To Moscow's gates of gold. So, spot of life and spirt
Of fire aforesaid, burn, each village death-begirt
By wall and wall of pine — unprobed undreamed abyss.

Early one winter morn, in such a village as this,
Snow-whitened everywhere except the middle road
Ice-roughed by track of sledge, there worked by his abode
Ivàn Ivànovitch, the carpenter, employed
On a huge shipmast trunk; his axe now trimmed and toyed
With branch and twig, and now some chop athwart the bole
Changed bole to billets, bared at once the sap and soul.
About him, watched the work his neighbors sheepskin-clad;

Each bearded mouth puffed steam, each gray eye twinkled glad
To see the sturdy arm which, never stopping play,
Proved strong man's blood still boils, freeze winter as he may.
Sudden, a burst of bells. Out of the road, on edge
Of the hamlet — horse's hoofs galloping. "How, a sledge?
What 's here?" cried all as — in, up to the open space,
Workyard and market-ground, folk's common meeting-place, —
Stumbled on, till he fell, in one last bound for life,
A horse: and, at his heels, a sledge held — "Dmìtri's wife!
Back without Dmìtri too! and children — where are they?
Only a frozen corpse!"

They drew it forth: then — "Nay,
Not dead, though like to die! Gone hence a month ago:
Home again, this rough jaunt — alone through night and snow —
What can the cause be? Hark — Droug, old horse, how he groans:
His day 's done! Chafe away, keep chafing, for she moans:
She 's coming to! Give here: see, mother-kin, your friends!
Cheer up, all safe at home! Warm inside makes amends
For outside cold, — sup quick! Don't look as we were bears!
What is it startles you? What strange adventure stares

Up at us in your face? You know friends — which
is which?
I'm Vàssili, he's Sergeì, Ivàn Ivànovitch . . ." 60

At the word, the woman's eyes, slow-wandering till
they neared
The blue eyes o'er the bush of honey-colored beard,
Took in full light and sense and — torn to rags, some
dream
Which hid the naked truth — O loud and long the
scream
She gave, as if all power of voice within her throat
Poured itself wild away to waste in one dread note!
Then followed gasps and sobs, and then the steady flow
Of kindly tears: the brain was saved, a man might
know.
Down fell her face upon the good friend's propping
knee;
His broad hands smoothed her head, as fain to brush
it free 70
From fancies, swarms that stung like bees unhived.
He soothed —
"Loukèria, Loùscha!" — still he, fondling, smoothed
and smoothed.
At last her lips formed speech.

"Ivàn, dear — you indeed!
You, just the same dear you! While I . . . O in-
tercede,
Sweet Mother, with thy Son Almighty — let his might
Bring yesterday once more, undo all done last night!
But this time yesterday, Ivàn, I sat like you,
A child on either knee, and, dearer than the two,
A babe inside my arms, close to my heart — that's lost

In morsels o'er the snow! Father, Son, Holy Ghost,
Cannot you bring again my blessed yesterday?" 81

When no more tears would flow, she told her tale: this way.

"Maybe, a month ago, — was it not? — news came here,
They wanted, deeper down, good workmen fit to rear
A church and roof it in. 'We'll go,' my husband said:
'None understands like me to melt and mould their lead.'
So, friends here helped us off — Ivàn, dear, you the first!
How gay we jingled forth, all five — (my heart will burst) —
While Dmìtri shook the reins, urged Droug upon his track!

"Well, soon the month ran out, we just were coming back, 90
When yesterday — behold, the village was on fire!
Fire ran from house to house. What help, as, nigh and nigher,
The flames came furious? 'Haste,' cried Dmìtri, 'men must do
The little good man may: to sledge and in with you,
You and our three! We check the fire by laying flat
Each building in its path, — I needs must stay for that, —
But you . . . no time for talk! Wrap round you every rug,
Cover the couple close, — you 'll have the babe to hug.
No care to guide old Droug, he knows his way, by guess,
Once start him on the road: but chirrup, none the less! 100

The snow lies glib as glass and hard as steel, and soon
You 'il have rise, fine and full, a marvel of a moon.
Hold straight up, all the same, this lighted twist of pitch!
Once home and with our friend Ivàn Ivànovitch,
All 's safe: I have my pay in pouch, all 's right with me,
So I but find as safe you and our precious three!
Off, Droug!' — because the flames had reached us, and the men
Shouted 'But lend a hand, Dmìtri — as good as ten!'

"So, in we bundled — I, and those God gave me once;
Old Droug, that 's stiff at first, seemed youthful for the nonce:
He understood the case, galloping straight ahead.
Out came the moon: my twist soon dwindled, feebly red
In that unnatural day — yes, daylight, bred between
Moon-light and snow-light, lamped those grotto-depths which screen
Such devils from God's eye. Ah, pines, how straight you grow
Nor bend one pitying branch, true breed of brutal snow!
Some undergrowth had served to keep the devils blind
While we escaped outside their border!

"Was that — wind?
Anyhow, Droug starts, stops, back go his ears, he snuffs,
Snorts, — never such a snort! then plunges, knows the sough 's
Only the wind: yet, no — our breath goes up too straight!
Still the low sound, — less low, loud, louder, at a rate
There 's no mistaking more! Shall I lean out — look — learn
The truth whatever it be? Pad, pad! At last, I turn —

" 'T is the regular pad of the wolves in pursuit of the life in the sledge!
An army they are: close-packed they press like the thrust of a wedge:
They increase as they hunt: for I see, through the pine-trunks ranged each side,
Slip forth new fiend and fiend, make wider and still more wide
The four-footed steady advance. The foremost — none may pass:
They are elders and lead the line, eye and eye — green-glowing brass!
But a long way distant still. Droug, save us! He does his best:
Yet they gain on us, gain, till they reach, — one reaches . . . How utter the rest?
O that Satan-faced first of the band! How he lolls out the length of his tongue,
How he laughs and lets gleam his white teeth! He is on me, his paws pry among
The wraps and the rugs! O my pair, my twin-pigeons, lie still and seem dead!
Stepàn, he shall never have you for a meal, — here 's your mother instead!
No, he will not be counselled — must cry, poor Stiòpka, so foolish! though first
Of my boy-brood, he was not the best: nay, neighbors have called him the worst:
He was puny, an undersized slip, — a darling to me, all the same!
But little there was to be praised in the boy, and a plenty to blame.
I loved him with heart and soul, yes — but, deal him a blow for a fault,

He would sulk for whole days. 'Foolish boy! lie still
or the villain will vault,
Will snatch you from over my head!' No use! he
cries, screams, — who can hold
Fast a boy in a frenzy of fear! It follows — as I foretold!
The Satan-face snatched and snapped: I tugged, I tore
— and then
His brother too needs must shriek! If one must go, 'tis
men
The Tsar needs, so we hear, not ailing boys! Perhaps
My hands relaxed their grasp, got tangled in the wraps:
God, he was gone! I looked: there tumbled the
cursed crew,
Each fighting for a share: too busy to pursue!
That 's so far gain at least: Droug, gallop another verst
Or two, or three — God sends we beat them, arrive the
first!
A mother who boasts two boys was ever accounted
rich:
Some have not a boy: some have, but lose him, —
God knows which
Is worse: how pitiful to see your weakling pine
And pale and pass away! Strong brats, this pair of
mine!

"O misery! for while I settle to what near seems
Content, I am 'ware again of the tramp, and again
there gleams —
Point and point — the line, eyes, levelled green brassy
fire!
So soon is resumed your chase? Will nothing appease,
naught tire
The furies? And yet I think — I am certain the race
is slack,

And the numbers are nothing like. Not a quarter of the pack!
Feasters and those full-fed are staying behind . . . Ah why?
We'll sorrow for that too soon! Now,—gallop, reach home, and die,
Nor ever again leave house, to trust our life in the trap
For life—we call a sledge! Teriòscha, in my lap!
Yes, I'll lie down upon you, tight-tie you with the strings
Here—of my heart! No fear, this time, your mother flings . . .
Flings? I flung? Never! but think!—a woman, after all 169
Contending with a wolf! Save you I must and shall,
Terentii!
"How now? What, you still head the race,
Your eyes and tongue and teeth crave fresh food, Satan-face?
There and there! Plain I struck green fire out! Flash again?
All a poor fist can do to damage eyes proves vain!
My fist—why not crunch that? He is wanton for . . . O God,
Why give this wolf his taste? Common wolves scrape and prod
The earth till out they scratch some corpse—mere putrid flesh!
Why must this glutton leave the faded, choose the fresh? 178
Terentii—God, feel!—his neck keeps fast thy bag
Of holy things, saints' bones, this Satan-face will drag
Forth, and devour along with him, our Pope declared
The relics were to save from danger!

"Spurned, not spared!
'T was through my arms, crossed arms, he — nuzzling now with snout,
Now ripping, tooth and claw — plucked, pulled Terentii out,
A prize indeed! I saw — how could I else but see? —
My precious one — I bit to hold back — pulled from me!
Up came the others, fell to dancing — did the imps! —
Skipped as they scampered round. There 's one is gray, and limps:
Who knows but old bad Màrpha, — she always owed me spite
And envied me my births, — skulks out of doors at night
And turns into a wolf, and joins the sisterhood,
And laps the youthful life, then slinks from out the wood,
Squats down at door by dawn, spins there demure as erst
— No strength, old crone, — not she! — to crawl forth half a verst!

"Well, I escaped with one: 'twixt one and none there lies
The space 'twixt heaven and hell. And see, a rose-light dyes
The endmost snow: 'tis dawn, 't is day, 't is safe at home!
We have outwitted you! Ay, monsters, snarl and foam,
Fight each the other fiend, disputing for a share, —
Forgetful, in your greed, our finest off we bear,
Tough Droug and I, — my babe, my boy that shall be man,
My man that shall be more, do all a hunter can
To trace and follow and find and catch and crucify

Wolves, wolfkins, all your crew! A thousand deaths shall die
The whimperingest cub that ever squeezed the teat!
'Take that!' we'll stab you with, — 'the tenderness we met
When, wretches, you danced round — not this, thank God — not this!
Hellhounds, we balk you!'

"But — Ah, God above! — Bliss, bliss —
Not the band, no! And yet — yes, for Droug knows him! One —
This only of them all has said 'She saves a son!' 210
His fellows disbelieve such luck: but he believes,
He lets them pick the bones, laugh at him in their sleeves:
He 's off and after us, — one speck, one spot, one ball
Grows bigger, bound on bound, — one wolf as good as all!
Oh but I know the trick! Have at the snaky tongue!
That's the right way with wolves! Go, tell your mates I wrung
The panting morsel out, left you to howl your worst!
Now for it — now! Ah me! I know him — thrice-accurst 218
Satan-face, — him to the end my foe!

"All fight 's in vain:
This time the green brass points pierce to my very brain.
I fall — fall as I ought — quite on the babe I guard:
I overspread with flesh the whole of him. Too hard
To die this way, torn piecemeal? Move hence? Not I — one inch!
Gnaw through me, through and through: flat thus I lie nor flinch!

O God, the feel of the fang furrowing my shoulder! — see!
It grinds — it grates the bone. O Kirill under me,
Could I do more? Beside he knew wolf's way to win:
I clung, closed round like wax: yet in he wedged and in,
Past my neck, past my breasts, my heart, until . . . how feels
The onion-bulb your knife parts, pushing through its peels,
Till out you scoop its clove wherein lie stalk and leaf
And bloom and seed unborn?

"That slew me: yes, in brief,
I died then, dead I lay doubtlessly till Droug stopped
Here, I suppose. I come to life, I find me propped
Thus — how or when or why, — I know not. Tell me, friends,
All was a dream: laugh quick and say the nightmare ends!
Soon I shall find my house: 't is over there: in proof,
Save for that chimney heaped with snow, you 'd see the roof
Which holds my three — my two — my one — not one?

"Life 's mixed
With misery, yet we live — must live. The Satan fixed
His face on mine so fast, I took its print as pitch
Takes what it cools beneath. Ivàn Ivànovitch,
'T is you unharden me, you thaw, disperse the thing!
Only keep looking kind, the horror will not cling.
Your face smooths fast away each print of Satan. Tears
— What good they do! Life 's sweet, and all its after-years,
Ivàn Ivànovitch, I owe you! Yours am I!
May God reward you, dear!"

Down she sank. Solemnly
Ivàn rose, raised his axe, — for fitly, as she knelt,
Her head lay: well-apart, each side, her arms hung,
— dealt
Lightning-swift thunder-strong one blow — no need
of more!
Headless she knelt on still: that pine was sound at core
(Neighbors were used to say) — cast-iron-kernelled —
which
Taxed for a second stroke Ivàn Ivànovitch.

The man was scant of words as strokes. "It had to be:
I could no other: God it was bade 'Act for me!'"
Then stooping, peering round — what is it now he
lacks?
A proper strip of bark wherewith to wipe his axe.
Which done, he turns, goes in, closes the door behind.
The others mute remain, watching the blood-snake
wind
Into a hiding-place among the splinter-heaps.

At length, still mute, all move: one lifts, — from
where it steeps
Redder each ruddy rag of pine, — the head: two more
Take up the dripping body: then, mute still as before,
Move in a sort of march, march on till marching
ends
Opposite to the church; where halting, — who sus-
pends,
By its long hair, the thing, deposits in its place
The piteous head: once more the body shows no trace
Of harm done: there lies whole the Loùscha, maid
and wife
And mother, loved until this latest of her life.

Then all sit on the bank of snow which bounds a space
Kept free before the porch for judgment: just the
place!

Presently all the souls, man, woman, child, which make
The village up, are found assembling for the sake
Of what is to be done. The very Jews are there:
A Gipsy-troop, though bound with horses for the
Fair,
Squats with the rest. Each heart with its conception
seethes
And simmers, but no tongue speaks: one may say, —
none breathes.

Anon from out the church totters the Pope — the
priest —
Hardly alive, so old, a hundred years at least.
With him, the Commune's head, a hoary senior too,
Stàrosta, that's his style, — like Equity Judge with
you, —
Natural Jurisconsult: then, fenced about with furs,
Pomeschik, — Lord of the Land, who wields — and
none demurs —
A power of life and death. They stoop, survey the
corpse.

Then, straightened on his staff, the Stàrosta — the
thorpe's
Sagaciousest old man — hears what you just have heard,
From Droug's first inrush, all, up to Ivan's last word
"God bade me act for him: I dared not disobey!"

Silence — the Pomeschik broke with "A wild wrong
way
Of righting wrong — if wrong there were, such wrath
to rouse!

Why was not law observed? What article allows
Whoso may please to play the judge, and, judgment dealt,
Play executioner, as promptly as we pelt
To death, without appeal, the vermin whose sole fault
Has been — it dared to leave the darkness of its vault,
Intrude upon our day! Too sudden and too rash!
What was this woman's crime? Suppose the church should crash
Down where I stand, your lord: bound are my serfs to dare
Their utmost that I 'scape: yet, if the crashing scare
My children, — as you are, — if sons fly, one and all,
Leave father to his fate, — poor cowards though I call
The runaways, I pause before I claim their life
Because they prized it more than mine. I would each wife
Died for her husband's sake, each son to save his sire:
'T is glory, I applaud — scarce duty, I require.
Ivàn Ivànovitch has done a deed that 's named
Murder by law and me: who doubts, may speak unblamed!"

All turned to the old Pope. "Ay, children, I am old —
How old, myself have got to know no longer. Rolled
Quite round, my orb of life, from infancy to age,
Seems passing back again to youth. A certain stage
At least I reach, or dream I reach, where I discern
Truer truths, laws behold more lawlike than we learn
When first we set our foot to tread the course I trod
With man to guide my steps: who leads me now is God.
'Your young men shall see visions:' and in my youth I saw

And paid obedience to man's visionary law :
'Your old men shall dream dreams :' and, in my age, a hand
Conducts me through the cloud round law to where I stand
Firm on its base,— know cause, who, before, knew effect.

"The world lies under me: and nowhere I detect
So great a gift as this — God's own — of human life.
'Shall the dead praise thee?' No! 'The whole live world is rife,
God, with thy glory,' rather! Life then, God's best of gifts,
For what shall man exchange? For life — when so he shifts
The weight and turns the scale, lets life for life restore
God's balance, sacrifice the less to gain the more,
Substitute — for low life, another's or his own — 329
Life large and liker God's who gave it: thus alone
May life extinguish life that life may trulier be!
How low this law descends on earth, is not for me
To trace: complexed becomes the simple, intricate
The plain, when I pursue law's winding. 'T is the straight
Outflow of law I know and name: to law, the fount
Fresh from God's footstool, friends, follow while I remount.

"A mother bears a child: perfection is complete
So far in such a birth. Enabled to repeat
The miracle of life, — herself was born so just
A type of womankind, that God sees fit to trust 340
Her with the holy task of giving life in turn.
Crowned by this crowning pride, — how say you, should she spurn

Regality — discrowned, unchilded, by her choice
Of barrenness exchanged for fruit which made rejoice
Creation, though life's self were lost in giving birth
To life more fresh and fit to glorify God's earth ?
How say you, should the hand God trusted with life's torch
Kindled to light the world — aware of sparks that scorch,
Let fall the same ? Forsooth, her flesh a fire-flake stings :
The mother drops the child ! Among what monstrous things
Shall she be classed ? Because of motherhood, each male
Yields to his partner place, sinks proudly in the scale :
His strength owned weakness, wit — folly, and courage — fear,
Beside the female proved male's mistress — only here.
The fox-dam, hunger-pined, will slay the felon sire
Who dares assault her whelp : the beaver, stretched on fire,
Will die without a groan : no pang avails to wrest
Her young from where they hide — her sanctuary breast.
What 's here then ? Answer me, thou dead one, as, I trow,
Standing at God's own bar, he bids thee answer now !
Thrice crowned wast thou — each crown of pride, a child — thy charge !
Where are they ? Lost ? Enough : no need that thou enlarge
On how or why the loss : life left to utter ' lost '
Condemns itself beyond appeal. The soldier's post
Guards from the foe's attack the camp he sentinels :

That he no traitor proved, this and this only tells —
Over the corpse of him trod foe to foe's success.
Yet — one by one thy crowns torn from thee — thou no less
To scare the world, shame God, — livedst! I hold He saw
The unexampled sin, ordained the novel law,
Whereof first instrument was first intelligence
Found loyal here. I hold that, failing human sense,
The very earth had oped, sky fallen, to efface
Humanity's new wrong, motherhood's first disgrace.
Earth oped not, neither fell the sky, for prompt was found
A man and man enough, head-sober and heart-sound,
Ready to hear God's voice, resolute to obey.
Ivàn Ivànovitch, I hold, has done, this day,
No otherwise than did, in ages long ago,
Moses when he made known the purport of that flow
Of fire athwart the law's twain-tables! I proclaim
Ivàn Ivànovitch God's servant!"

At which name
Uprose that creepy whisper from out the crowd, is wont
To swell and surge and sink when fellow-men confront
A punishment that falls on fellow flesh and blood,
Appallingly beheld — shudderingly understood,
No less, to be the right, the just, the merciful.
"God's servant!" hissed the crowd.

When that Amen grew dull
And died away and left acquittal plain adjudged,
"Amen!" last sighed the lord. "There's none shall say I grudged
Escape from punishment in such a novel case.
Deferring to old age and holy life, — be grace

Granted ! say I. No less, scruples might shake a sense
Firmer than I boast mine. Law 's law, and evidence
Of breach therein lies plain, — blood-red-bright, — all may see !
Yet all absolve the deed : absolved the deed must be !

" And next — as mercy rules the hour — methinks 't were well
You signify forthwith its sentence, and dispel
The doubts and fears, I judge, which busy now the head
Law puts a halter round — a halo — you, instead ! 400
Ivàn Ivànovitch — what think you he expects
Will follow from his feat ? Go, tell him — law protects
Murder, for once : no need he longer keep behind
The Sacred Pictures — where skulks Innocence enshrined,
Or I missay ! Go, some ! You others, haste and hide
The dismal object there : get done, whate'er betide ! "

So, while the youngers raised the corpse, the elders trooped
Silently to the house : where halting, some one stooped,
Listened beside the door ; all there was silent too.
Then they held counsel ; then pushed door and, passing through, 410
Stood in the murderer's presence.
Ivàn Ivànovitch
Knelt, building on the floor that Kremlin rare and rich
He deftly cut and carved on lazy winter nights.
Some five young faces watched, breathlessly, as, to rights,
Piece upon piece, he reared the fabric nigh complete.
Stèscha, Ivàn's old mother, sat spinning by the heat
Of the oven where his wife Kàtia stood baking bread.
Ivàn's self, as he turned his honey-colored head,

Was just in act to drop, 'twixt fir-cones, — each a dome, —
The scooped-out yellow gourd presumably the home
Of Kolokol the Big : the bell, therein to hitch,
— An acorn-cup — was ready : Ivàn Ivànovitch
Turned with it in his mouth.

They told him he was free
As air to walk abroad. "How otherwise?" asked he.

TRAY.

Sing me a hero! Quench my thirst
Of soul, ye bards!
Quoth Bard the first:
"Sir Olaf, the good knight, did don
His helm and eke his habergeon . . ."
Sir Olaf and his bard ——!

"That sin-scathed brow" (quoth Bard the second)
"That eye wide ope as though Fate beckoned
My hero to some steep, beneath
Which precipice smiled tempting death" . . .
You too without your host have reckoned!

"A beggar-child" (let's hear this third!)
"Sat on a quay's edge: like a bird
Sang to herself at careless play,
And fell into the stream. 'Dismay!
Help, you the standers-by!' None stirred.

"Bystanders reason, think of wives
And children ere they risk their lives.

Over the balustrade has bounced
A mere instinctive dog, and pounced
Plumb on the prize. 'How well he dives!

"'Up he comes with the child, see, tight
In mouth, alive too, clutched from quite
A depth of ten feet — twelve, I bet!
Good dog! What, off again? There 's yet
Another child to save? All right!

"'How strange we saw no other fall!
It 's instinct in the animal.
Good dog! But he 's a long while under:
If he got drowned I should not wonder —
Strong current, that against the wall!

"'Here he comes, holds in mouth this time
— What may the thing be? Well, that 's prime!
Now, did you ever? Reason reigns
In man alone, since all Tray's pains
Have fished — the child's doll from the slime!'

"And so, amid the laughter gay,
Trotted my hero off, — old Tray,
Till somebody, prerogatived
With reason, reasoned: 'Why he dived,
His brain would show us, I should say.

"'John, go and catch — or, if needs be,
Purchase — that animal for me!
By vivisection, at expense
Of half-an-hour and eighteenpence,
How brain secretes dog's soul, we 'll see!'"

NED BRATTS.

'T was Bedford Special Assize, one daft Midsummer's Day:
A broiling blasting June, — was never its like, men say.
Corn stood sheaf-ripe already, and trees looked yellow as that;
Ponds drained dust-dry, the cattle lay foaming around each flat.
Inside town, dogs went mad, and folk kept bibbing beer
While the parsons prayed for rain. 'T was horrible, yes — but queer:
Queer — for the sun laughed gay, yet nobody moved a hand
To work one stroke at his trade: as given to understand
That all was come to a stop, work and such worldly ways,
And the world's old self about to end in a merry blaze.
Midsummer's Day moreover was the first of Bedford Fair,
With Bedford Town's tag-rag and bobtail a-bowsing there.

But the Court House, Quality crammed: through doors ope, windows wide,
High on the Bench you saw sit Lordships side by side.
There frowned Chief Justice Jukes, fumed learned Brother Small,
And fretted their fellow Judge: like threshers, one and all,
Of a reek with laying down the law in a furnace. Why?

Because their lungs breathed flame — the regular crowd forbye —
From gentry pouring in — quite a nosegay, to be sure!
How else could they pass the time, six mortal hours endure
Till night should extinguish day, when matters might haply mend?
Meanwhile no bad resource was — watching begin and end
Some trial for life and death, in a brisk five minutes' space,
And betting which knave would 'scape, which hang, from his sort of face.

So, their Lordships toiled and moiled, and a deal of work was done
(I warrant) to justify the mirth of the crazy sun
As this and t'other lout, struck dumb at the sudden show
Of red robes and white wigs, boggled nor answered "Boh!"
When asked why he, Tom Styles, should not — because Jack Nokes
Had stolen the horse — be hanged: for Judges must have their jokes,
And louts must make allowance — let 's say, for some blue fly
Which punctured a dewy scalp where the frizzles stuck awry —
Else Tom had fleered scot-free, so nearly over and done
Was the main of the job. Full-measure, the gentles enjoyed their fun,
As a twenty-five were tried, rank puritans caught at prayer

In a cow-house and laid by the heels, — have at 'em, devil may care! —
And ten were prescribed the whip, and ten a brand on the cheek,
And five a slit of the nose — just leaving enough to tweak.

Well, things at jolly high-tide, amusement steeped in fire,
While noon smote fierce the roof's red tiles to heart's desire,
The Court a-simmer with smoke, one ferment of oozy flesh,
One spirituous humming musk mount-mounting until its mesh
Entoiled all heads in a fluster, and Serjeant Postlethwayte
— Dashing the wig oblique as he mopped his oily pate —
Cried "Silence, or I grow grease! No loophole lets in air?
Jurymen, — Guilty, Death! Gainsay me if you dare!"
— Things at this pitch, I say, — what hubbub without the doors?
What laughs, shrieks, hoots and yells, what rudest of uproars?

Bounce through the barrier throng a bulk comes rolling vast!
Thumps, kicks, — no manner of use! — spite of them rolls at last
Into the midst a ball which, bursting, brings to view

Publican Black Ned Bratts and Tabby his big wife too:
Both in a muck-sweat, both . . . were never such eyes uplift
At the sight of yawning hell, such nostrils — snouts that sniffed
Sulphur, such mouths a-gape ready to swallow flame!
Horrified, hideous, frank fiend-faces! yet, all the same,
Mixed with a certain . . . eh? how shall I dare style — mirth
The desperate grin of the guest that, could they break from earth,
Heaven was above, and hell might rage in impotence
Below the saved, the saved!

"Confound you! (no offence!)
Out of our way, — push, wife! Yonder their Worships be!" 61
Ned Bratts has reached the bar, and "Hey, my Lords," roars he,
"A Jury of life and death, Judges the prime of the land,
Constables, javelineers, — all met, if I understand,
To decide so knotty a point as whether 't was Jack or Joan
Robbed the henroost, pinched the pig, hit the King's Arms with a stone,
Dropped the baby down the well, left the tithesman in the lurch,
Or, three whole Sundays running, not once attended church!
What a pother — do these deserve the parish-stocks or whip,
More or less brow to brand, much or little nose to snip, — 70

When, in our Public, plain stand we — that 's we
stand here,
I and my Tab, brass-bold, brick-built of beef and beer,
— Do not we, slut? Step forth and show your beauty,
jade!
Wife of my bosom — that 's the word now! What
a trade
We drove! None said us nay: nobody loved his life
So little as wag a tongue against us, — did they, wife?
Yet they knew us all the while, in their hearts, for
what we are
— Worst couple, rogue and quean, unhanged — search
near and far!
Eh, Tab? The pedler, now — o'er his noggin —
who warned a mate
To cut and run, nor risk his pack where its loss of
weight
Was the least to dread, — aha, how we two laughed
a-good
As, stealing round the midden, he came on where I stood
With billet poised and raised, — you, ready with the
rope, —
Ah, but that 's past, that 's sin repented of, we hope!
Men knew us for that same, yet safe and sound stood
we!
The lily-livered knaves knew too (I 've balked a
d——)
Our keeping the 'Pied Bull' was just a mere pretence:
Too slow the pounds make food, drink, lodging, from
out the pence!
There 's not a stoppage to travel has chanced, this ten
long year,
No break into hall or grange, no lifting of nag or steer,
Not a single roguery, from the clipping of a purse

To the cutting of a throat, but paid us toll. Od's curse!
When Gipsy Smouch made bold to cheat us of our due,
— Eh, Tab? the Squire's strong-box we helped the rascal to —
I think he pulled a face, next Sessions' swinging-time!
He danced the jig that needs no floor, — and, here 's the prime,
'T was Scroggs that houghed the mare! Ay, those were busy days!

"Well, there we flourished brave, like scripture-trees called bays,
Faring high, drinking hard, in money up to head
— Not to say, boots and shoes, when . . . Zounds, I nearly said —
Lord, to unlearn one's language! How shall we labor, wife?
Have you, fast hold, the Book? Grasp, grip it, for your life!
See, sirs, here 's life, salvation! Here 's — hold but out my breath —
When did I speak so long without once swearing? 'Sdeath,
No, nor unhelped by ale since man and boy! And yet
All yesterday I had to keep my whistle wet
While reading Tab this Book: book? don't say 'book' — they 're plays,
Songs, ballads and the like: here 's no such strawy blaze,
But sky wide ope, sun, moon, and seven stars out full-flare!
Tab, help and tell! I 'm hoarse. A mug! or — no, a prayer!

Dip for one out of the Book! Who wrote it in the Jail
— He plied his pen unhelped by beer, sirs, I'll be bail!

"I've got my second wind. In trundles she — that's Tab.
'Why, Gammer, what's come now, that — bobbing like a crab
On Yule-tide bowl — your head's a-work and both your eyes
Break loose? Afeard, you fool? As if the dead can rise!
Say — Bagman Dick was found last May with fuddling-cap
Stuffed in his mouth: to choke 's a natural mishap!'
'Gaffer, be — blessed,' cries she, 'and Bagman Dick as well! 119
I, you, and he are damned: this Public is our hell:
We live in fire: live coals don't feel! — once quenched, they learn —
Cinders do, to what dust they moulder while they burn!'

"'If you don't speak straight out,' says I — belike I swore —
'A knobstick, well you know the taste of, shall, once more,
Teach you to talk, my maid!' She ups with such a face,
Heart sunk inside me. 'Well, pad on, my prate-apace!'

"'I've been about those laces we need for . . . never mind!
If henceforth they tie hands, 't is mine they 'll have to bind.

You know who makes them best — the Tinker in our cage,
Pulled-up for gospelling, twelve years ago: no age
To try another trade, — yet, so he scorned to take
Money he did not earn, he taught himself the make
Of laces, tagged and tough — Dick Bagman found them so!
Good customers were we! Well, last week, you must know
His girl, — the blind young chit, who hawks about his wares, —
She takes it in her head to come no more — such airs
These hussies have! Yet, since we need a stoutish lace, —
"I 'll to the jail-bird father, abuse her to his face!"
So, first I filled a jug to give me heart, and then,
Primed to the proper pitch, I posted to their den —
Patmore — they style their prison! I tip the turnkey, catch
My heart up, fix my face, and fearless lift the latch —
Both arms a-kimbo, in bounce with a good round oath
Ready for rapping out: no "Lawks" nor "By my troth!"

"'There sat my man, the father. He looked up: what one feels
When heart that leapt to mouth drops down again to heels!
He raised his hand . . . Hast seen, when drinking out the night,
And in the day, earth grow another something quite
Under the sun's first stare? I stood a very stone.

" " " Woman!" (a fiery tear he put in every tone),
" How should my child frequent your house where
lust is sport,
Violence — trade? Too true! I trust no vague
report.
Her angel's hand, which stops the sight of sin, leaves
clear
The other gate of sense, lets outrage through the ear.
What has she heard! — which, heard shall never be
again.
Better lack food than feast, a Dives in the — wain
Or reign or train — of Charles!" (His language was
not ours:
'T is my belief, God spoke: no tinker has such powers.)
" Bread, only bread they bring — my laces: if we
broke
Your lump of leavened sin, the loaf's first crumb would
choke!"

" ' Down on my marrow-bones! Then all at once
rose he:
His brown hair burst a-spread, his eyes were suns to see:
Up went his hands: " Through flesh, I reach, I read
thy soul!
So may some stricken tree look blasted, bough and bole,
Champed by the fire-tooth, charred without, and yet,
thrice-bound
With dreriment about, within may life be found,
A prisoned power to branch and blossom as before,
Could but the gardener cleave the cloister, reach the
core,
Loosen the vital sap: yet where shall help be found?
Who says ' How save it? ' — nor ' Why cumbers it
the ground? '

Woman, that tree art thou! All sloughed about with scurf,
Thy stag-horns fright the sky, thy snake-roots sting the turf!
Drunkenness, wantonness, theft, murder gnash and gnarl
Thine outward, case thy soul with coating like the marle
Satan stamps flat upon each head beneath his hoof!
And how deliver such? The strong men keep aloof,
Lover and friend stand far, the mocking ones pass by,
Tophet gapes wide for prey: lost soul, despair and die!
What then? 'Look unto me and be ye saved!'
saith God:
'I strike the rock, outstreats the life-stream at my rod!
Be your sins scarlet, wool shall they seem like, — although
As crimson red, yet turn white as the driven snow!'"

"'There, there, there! All I seem to somehow understand
Is — that, if I reached home, 't was through the guiding hand
Of his blind girl which led and led me through the streets
And out of town and up to door again. What greets
First thing my eye, as limbs recover from their swoon?
A book — this Book she gave at parting. "Father's boon —
The Book he wrote: it reads as if he spoke himself:
He cannot preach in bonds, so, — take it down from sheif
When you want counsel, — think you hear his very voice!"

"'Wicked dear Husband, first despair and then rejoice!
Dear wicked Husband, waste no tick of moment more,
Be saved like me, bald trunk! There 's greenness yet at core,
Sap under slough! Read, read!'

"Let me take breath, my lords!
I 'd like to know, are these — hers, mine, or Bunyan's words?
I'm 'wildered — scarce with drink, — nowise with drink alone!
You 'll say, with heat: but heat 's no stuff to split a stone
Like this black boulder — this flint heart of mine: the Book —
That dealt the crashing blow! Sirs, here 's the fist that shook
His beard till Wrestler Jem howled like a just-lugged bear!
You had brained me with a feather: at once I grew aware
Christmas was meant for me. A burden at your back,
Good Master Christmas? Nay, — yours was that Joseph's sack,
— Or whose it was, — which held the cup, — compared with mine!
Robbery loads my loins, perjury cracks my chine,
Adultery . . . nay, Tab, you pitched me as I flung!
One word, I 'll up with fist . . . No, sweet spouse, hold your tongue!

"I'm hasting to the end. The Book, sirs — take and read!
You have my history in a nutshell, — ay, indeed!
It must off, my burden! See, — slack straps and into pit,

Roll, reach the bottom, rest, rot there — a plague on it!
For a mountain 's sure to fall and bury Bedford Town,
'Destruction' — that 's the name, and fire shall burn it down!
O 'scape the wrath in time! Time 's now, if not too late.
How can I pilgrimage up to the wicket-gate?
Next comes Despond the slough: not that I fear to pull
Through mud, and dry my clothes at brave House Beautiful —
But it 's late in the day, I reckon: had I left years ago
Town, wife, and ch ldren dear . . . Well, Christmas did, you know! —
Soon I had met in the valley and tried my cudgel's strength
On the enemy horned and winged, a-straddle across its length!
Have at his horns, thwick — thwack: they snap, see! Hoof and hoof —
Bang, break the fetlock-bones! For love's sake, keep aloof
Angels! I 'm man and match, — this cudgel for my flail, —
To thresh him, hoofs and horns, bat's wing and serpent's tail!
A chance gone by! But then, what else does Hopeful ding
Into the deafest ear except — hope, hope 's the thing?
Too late i' the day for me to thrid the windings: but
There 's still a way to win the race by death's short cut!
Did Master Faithful need climb the Delightful Mounts?
No, straight to Vanity Fair, — a fair, by all accounts,

Such as is held outside, — lords, ladies, grand and gay, —
Says he in the face of them, just what you hear me say.
And the Judges brought him in guilty, and brought him out
To die in the market-place — St. Peter's Green's about
The same thing: there they flogged, flayed, buffeted, lanced with knives,
Pricked him with swords, — I 'll swear, he 'd full a cat's nine lives, —
So to his end at last came Faithful, — ha, ha, he!
Who holds the highest card? for there stands hid, you see,
Behind the rabble-rout, a chariot, pair and all:
He 's in, he 's off, he 's up, through clouds, at trumpet-call,
Carried the nearest way to Heaven-gate! Odds my life —
Has nobody a sword to spare? not even a knife?
Then hang me, draw and quarter! Tab — do the same by her!
O Master Worldly-Wiseman . . . that 's Master Interpreter,
Take the will, not the deed! Our gibbet 's handy close:
Forestall Last Judgment-Day! Be kindly, not morose!
There wants no earthly judge-and-jurying: here we stand —
Sentence our guilty selves: so, hang us out of hand!
Make haste for pity's sake! A single moment's loss
Means — Satan 's lord once more: his whisper shoots across
All singing in my heart, all praying in my brain,
'It comes of heat and beer!' — hark how he guffaws plain!

'To-morrow you'll wake bright, and, in a safe skin, hug
Your sound selves, Tab and you, over a foaming jug!
You've had such qualms before, time out of mind!' He's right!
Did not we kick and cuff and curse away, that night
When home we blindly reeled, and left poor humpback Joe
I' the lurch to pay for what . . . somebody did, you know!
Both of us maundered then 'Lame humpback, — never more
Will he come limping, drain his tankard at our door!
He'll swing, while — somebody . . .' Says Tab, 'No, for I'll peach!'
'I'm for you, Tab,' cries I, 'there's rope enough for each!'
So blubbered we, and bussed, and went to bed upon
The grace of Tab's good thought: by morning, all was gone!
We laughed — 'What's life to him, a cripple of no account?'
Oh, waves increase around — I feel them mount and mount!
Hang us! To-morrow brings Tom Bearward with his bears:
One new black-muzzled brute beats Sackerson, he swears:
(Sackerson, for my money!) And, baiting o'er, the Brawl
They lead on Turner's Patch, — lads, lasses, up tails all, —
I'm i' the thick o' the throng! That means the Iron Cage,

— Means the Lost Man inside! Where's hope for such as wage
War against light? Light's left, light's here, I hold light still,
So does Tab — make but haste to hang us both! You will?"

I promise, when he stopped you might have heard a mouse
Squeak, such a death-like hush sealed up the old Mote House.
But when the mass of man sank meek upon his knees,
While Tab, alongside, wheezed a hoarse "Do hang us, please!"
Why, then the waters rose, no eye but ran with tears,
Hearts heaved, heads thumped, until, paying all past arrears
Of pity and sorrow, at last a regular scream outbroke
Of triumph, joy and praise.

My Lord Chief Justice spoke,
First mopping brow and cheek, where still, for one that budged,
Another bead broke fresh: "What Judge, that ever judged
Since first the world began, judged such a case as this?
Why, Master Bratts, long since, folk smelt you out, I wis!
I had my doubts, i' faith, each time you played the fox
Convicting geese of crime in yonder witness-box —
Yea, much did I misdoubt, the thief that stole her eggs
Was hardly goosey's self at Reynard's game, i' feggs!
Yet thus much was to praise — you spoke to point, direct —

Swore you heard, saw the theft: no jury could suspect —
Dared to suspect, — I 'll say, — a spot in white so clear:
Goosey was throttled, true: but thereof godly fear
Came of example set, much as our laws intend;
And, though a fox confessed, you proved the Judge's friend.
What if I had my doubts? Suppose I gave them breath,
Brought you to bar: what work to do, ere 'Guilty, Death,' —
Had paid our pains! What heaps of witnesses to drag
From holes and corners, paid from out the County's bag!
Trial three dog-days long! *Amicus Curiæ* — that 's
Your title, no dispute — truth-telling Master Bratts!
Thank you, too, Mistress Tab! Why doubt one word you say?
Hanging you both deserve, hanged both shall be this day!
The tinker needs must be a proper man. I 've heard
He lies in Jail long since: if Quality's good word
Warrants me letting loose, — some householder, I mean —
Freeholder, better still, — I don't say but — between
Now and next Sessions . . . Well! Consider of his case,
I promise to, at least: we owe him so much grace.
Not that — no, God forbid! — I lean to think, as you,
The grace that such repent is any jail-bird's due:
I rather see the fruit of twelve years' pious reign —
Astræa Redux, Charles restored his rights again!
— Of which, another time! I somehow feel a peace
Stealing across the world. May deeds like this increase!
So, Master Sheriff, stay that sentence I pronounced
On those two dozen odd: deserving to be trounced
Soundly, and yet . . . well, well, at all events despatch

This pair of — shall I say, sinner-saints? — ere we
catch
Their jail-distemper too. Stop tears, or I 'll indite
All weeping Bedfordshire for turning Bunyanite! "

So, forms were galloped through. If Justice, on the
spur,
Proved somewhat expeditious, would Quality demur?
And happily hanged were they, — why lengthen out
my tale? —
Where Bunyan's Statue stands facing where stood his
Jail.

DRAMATIC IDYLS.

SECOND SERIES.

1880.

"You are sick, that 's sure" — they say:
"Sick of what?" — they disagree.
"'T is the brain" — thinks Doctor A;
"'T is the heart" — holds Doctor B;
"The liver — my life I 'd lay!"
"The lungs!" "The lights!"
Ah me!

So ignorant of man's whole
Of bodily organs plain to see —
So sage and certain, frank and free,
About what 's under lock and key —
Man's soul!

ECHETLOS.

Here is a story shall stir you! Stand up, Greeks dead and gone,
Who breasted, beat Barbarians, stemmed Persia rolling on,
Did the deed and saved the world, for the day was Marathon!

No man but did his manliest, kept rank and fought away
In his tribe and file : up, back, out, down — was the spear-arm play :
Like a wind-whipt branchy wood, all spear-arms a-swing that day !

But one man kept no rank and his sole arm plied no spear,
As a flashing came and went, and a form i' the van, the rear,
Brightened the battle up, for he blazed now there, now here.

Nor helmed nor shielded, he ! but, a goat-skin all his wear,
Like a tiller of the soil, with a clown's limbs broad and bare,
Went he ploughing on and on : he pushed with a ploughman's share.

Did the weak mid-line give way, as tunnies on whom the shark
Precipitates his bulk ? Did the right-wing halt when, stark
On his heap of slain lay stretched Kallimachos Polemarch ?

Did the steady phalanx falter ? To the rescue, at the need,
The clown was ploughing Persia, clearing Greek earth of weed,
As he routed through the Sakian and rooted up the Mede.

But the deed done, battle won, — nowhere to be descried
On the meadow, by the stream, at the marsh, — look far and wide
From the foot of the mountain, no, to the last blood-plashed seaside, —

Not anywhere on view blazed the large limbs thonged and brown,
Shearing and clearing still with the share before which — down
To the dust went Persia's pomp, as he ploughed for Greece, that clown!

How spake the Oracle? "Care for no name at all!
Say but just this: 'We praise one helpful whom we call
The Holder of the Ploughshare.' The great deed ne'er grows small."

Not the great name! Sing — woe for the great name Miltiadés
And its end at Paros isle! Woe for Themistokles
— Satrap in Sardis court! Name not the clown like these!

CLIVE.

I AND Clive were friends — and why not? Friends! I think you laugh, my lad.
Clive it was gave England India, while your father gives — egad,
England nothing but the graceless boy who lures him on to speak —

"Well, Sir, you and Clive were comrades —" with a tongue thrust in your cheek!
Very true: in my eyes, your eyes, all the world's eyes, Clive was man,
I was, am and ever shall be — mouse, nay, mouse of all its clan
Sorriest sample, if you take the kitchen's estimate for fame;
While the man Clive — he fought Plassy, spoiled the clever foreign game,
Conquered and annexed and Englished!

Never mind! As o'er my punch
(You away) I sit of evenings, — silence, save for biscuit-crunch,
Black, unbroken, — thought grows busy, thrids each pathway of old years,
Notes this forthright, that meander, till the long-past life appears
Like an outspread map of country plodded through, each mile and rood,
Once, and well remembered still: I'm startled in my solitude
Ever and anon by — what's the sudden mocking light that breaks
On me as I slap the table till no rummer-glass but shakes
While I ask — aloud, I do believe, God help me! — "Was it thus?
Can it be that so I faltered, stopped when just one step for us —"
(Us, — you were not born, I grant, but surely some day born would be)
" — One bold step had gained a province" (figurative talk, you see)

"Got no end of wealth and honor, — yet I stood stock still no less?"
— "For I was not Clive," you comment: but it needs no Clive to guess
Wealth were handy, honor ticklish, did no writing on the wall
Warn me "Trespasser,' ware man-traps!" Him who braves that notice — call
Hero! none of such heroics suit myself who read plain words,
Doff my hat, and leap no barrier. Scripture says the land 's the Lord's:
Louts then — what avail the thousand, noisy in a smock-frocked ring,
All-agog to have me trespass, clear the fence, be Clive their king?
Higher warrant must you show me ere I set one foot before
T' other in that dark direction, though I stand for evermore
Poor as Job and meek as Moses. Evermore? No! By-and-by
Job grows rich and Moses valiant, Clive turns out less wise than I.
Don't object "Why call him friend, then?" Power is power, my boy, and still
Marks a man, — God's gift magnific, exercised for good or ill.
You 've your boot now on my hearth-rug, tread what was a tiger's skin:
Rarely such a royal monster as I lodged the bullet in!
True, he murdered half a village, so his own death came to pass;

Still, for size and beauty, cunning, courage — ah, the brute he was!
Why, that Clive, — that youth, that greenhorn, that quill-driving clerk, in fine, —
He sustained a siege in Arcot. . . . But the world knows! Pass the wine.

Where did I break off at? How bring Clive in? Oh, you mentioned "fear"!
Just so: and, said I, that minds me of a story you shall hear.

We were friends then, Clive and I: so, when the clouds, about the orb
Late supreme, encroaching slowly, surely, threatened to absorb
Ray by ray its noontide brilliance, — friendship might, with steadier eye
Drawing near, bear what had burned else, now no blaze — all majesty.
Too much bee's-wing floats my figure? Well, suppose a castle 's new:
None presume to climb its ramparts, none find foothold sure for shoe
'Twixt those squares and squares of granite plating the impervious pile
As his scale-mail's warty iron cuirasses a crocodile.
Reels that castle thunder-smitten, storm-dismantled? From without
Scrambling up by crack and crevice, every cockney prates about
Towers — the heap he kicks now! turrets — just the measure of his cane!
Will that do? Observe moreover — (same similitude again) —

Such a castle seldom crumbles by sheer stress of cannonade:
'T is when foes are foiled and fighting's finished that vile rains invade,
Grass o'ergrows, o'ergrows till night-birds congregating find no holes
Fit to build in like the topmost sockets made for banner-poles.
So Clive crumbled slow in London — crashed at last.

A week before,
Dining with him, — after trying churchyard-chat of days of yore, —
Both of us stopped, tired as tombstones, head-piece, foot-piece, when they lean
Each to other, drowsed in fog-smoke, o'er a coffined Past between.
As I saw his head sink heavy, guessed the soul's extinguishment
By the glazing eyeball, noticed how the furtive fingers went
Where a drug-box skulked behind the honest liquor, — "One more throw
Try for Clive!" thought I: "Let's venture some good rattling question!" So —
"Come, Clive, tell us" — out I blurted — "what to tell in turn, years hence,
When my boy — suppose I have one — asks me on what evidence
I maintain my friend of Plassy proved a warrior every whit
Worth your Alexanders, Cæsars, Marlboroughs and — what said Pitt? —

Frederick the Fierce himself! Clive told me once" —
I want to say —
"Which feat out of all those famous doings bore the bell away
— In his own calm estimation, mark you, not the mob's rough guess —
Which stood foremost as evincing what Clive called courageousness!
Come! what moment of the minute, what speck-centre in the wide
Circle of the action saw your mortal fairly deified?
(Let alone that filthy sleep-stuff, swallow bold this wholesome Port!)
If a friend has leave to question, — when were you most brave, in short?"

Up he arched his brows o' the instant — formidably Clive again.
"When was I most brave? I'd answer, were the instance half as plain
As another instance that's a brain-lodged crystal — curse it! — here
Freezing when my memory touches — ugh! — the time I felt most fear.
Ugh! I cannot say for certain if I showed fear — anyhow,
Fear I felt, and, very likely, shuddered, since I shiver now."

"Fear!" smiled I. "Well, that's the rarer: that's a specimen to seek,
Ticket up in one's museum, *Mind-Freaks, Lord Clive's Fear, Unique!*"
Down his brows dropped. On the table painfully he pored as though

Tracing, in the stains and streaks there, thoughts encrusted long ago.
When he spoke 't was like a lawyer reading word by word some will,
Some blind jungle of a statement, — beating on and on until
Out there leaps fierce life to fight with.

"This fell in my factor-days.
Desk-drudge, slaving at St. David's, one must game, or drink, or craze.
I chose gaming: and, — because your high-flown gamesters hardly take
Umbrage at a factor's elbow if the factor pays his stake, —
I was winked at in a circle where the company was choice,
Captain This and Major That, men high of color, loud of voice,
Yet indulgent, condescending to the modest juvenile
Who not merely risked but lost his hard-earned guineas with a smile.

"Down I sat to cards, one evening, — had for my antagonist
Somebody whose name 's a secret — you 'll know why — so, if you list,
Call him Cock o' the Walk, my scarlet son of Mars from head to heel!
Play commenced: and, whether Cocky fancied that a clerk must feel
Quite sufficient honor came of bending over one green baize,
I the scribe with him the warrior, — guessed no penman dared to raise

Shadow of objection should the honor stay but playing
end
More or less abruptly, — whether disinclined he grew
to spend
Practice strictly scientific on a booby born to stare
At — not ask of — lace-and-ruffles if the hand they hide
plays fair, —
Anyhow, I marked a movement when he bade me
'Cut!'

"I rose.
'Such the new manœuvre, Captain? I'm a novice:
knowledge grows.
What, you force a card, you cheat, Sir?'

"Never did a thunder-clap
Cause emotion, startle Thyrsis locked with Chloe in
his lap,
As my word and gesture (down I flung my cards to
join the pack)
Fired the man of arms, whose visage, simply red
before, turned black.

"When he found his voice, he stammered 'That ex-
pression once again!'

"'Well, you forced a card and cheated!'

"'Possibly a factor's brain,
Busied with his all-important balance of accounts, may
deem
Weighing words superfluous trouble: *cheat* to clerkly
ears may seem
Just the joke for friends to venture: but we are not
friends, you see!

When a gentleman is joked with, — if he 's good at repartee,
He rejoins, as do I — Sirrah, on your knees, withdraw in full !
Beg my pardon, or be sure a kindly bullet through your skull
Lets in light and teaches manners to what brain it finds ! Choose quick —
Have your life snuffed out or, kneeling, pray me trim yon candle-wick ! '

" ' Well, you cheated ! '

" Then outbroke a howl from all the friends around.
To his feet sprang each in fury, fists were clenched and teeth were ground.
' End it ! no time like the present ! Captain, yours were our disgrace !
No delay, begin and finish ! Stand back, leave the pair a space !
Let civilians be instructed : henceforth simply ply the pen,
Fly the sword ! This clerk 's no swordsman ? Suit him with a pistol, then !
Even odds ! A dozen paces 'twixt the most and least expert
Make a dwarf a giant's equal : nay, the dwarf, if he 's alert,
Likelier hits the broader target ! '

" Up we stood accordingly.
As they handed me the weapon, such was my soul's thirst to try
Then and there conclusions with this bully, tread on and stamp out

Every spark of his existence, that, — crept close to, curled about
By that toying tempting teasing fool-forefinger's middle joint, —
Don't you guess? — the trigger yielded. Gone my chance! and at the point
Of such prime success moreover: scarce an inch above his head
Went my ball to hit the wainscot. He was living, I was dead.

"Up he marched in flaming triumph — 't was his right, mind! — up, within
Just an arm's length. 'Now, my clerkling,' chuckled Cocky with a grin
As the levelled piece quite touched me, 'Now, Sir Counting-House, repeat
That expression which I told you proved bad manners! Did I cheat?'

"'Cheat you did, you knew you cheated, and, this moment, know as well.
As for me, my homely breeding bids you — fire and go to Hell!'

"Twice the muzzle touched my forehead. Heavy barrel, flurried wrist,
Either spoils a steady lifting. Thrice: then, 'Laugh at Hell who list,
I can't! God 's no fable either. Did this boy's eye wink once? No!
There 's no standing him and Hell and God all three against me, — so,
I did cheat!'

"And down he threw the pistol, out rushed — by the door
Possibly, but, as for knowledge if by chimney, roof or floor,
He effected disappearance — I 'll engage no glance was sent
That way by a single starer, such a blank astonishment
Swallowed up their senses: as for speaking — mute they stood as mice.

"Mute not long, though! Such reaction, such a hubbub in a trice!
'Rogue and rascal! Who 'd have thought it? What 's to be expected next,
When His Majesty's Commission serves a sharper as pretext
For . . . But where 's the need of wasting time now? Naught requires delay:
Punishment the Service cries for: let disgrace be wiped away
Publicly, in good broad daylight! Resignation? No, indeed
Drum and fife must play the Rogue's March, rank and file be free to speed
Tardy marching on the rogue's part by appliance in the rear
— Kicks administered shall right this wronged civilian, — never fear,
Mister Clive, for — though a clerk — you bore yourself — suppose we say —
Just as would beseem a soldier!'

"'Gentlemen, attention — pray!
First, one word!'

"I passed each speaker severally in review.
When I had precise their number, names and styles, and fully knew
Over whom my supervision thenceforth must extend, — why, then ——

"'Some five minutes since, my life lay — as you all saw, gentlemen —
At the mercy of your friend there. Not a single voice was raised
In arrest of judgment, not one tongue — before my powder blazed —
Ventured "Can it be the youngster blundered, really seemed to mark
Some irregular proceeding? We conjecture in the dark,
Guess at random, — still, for sake of fair play — what if for a freak,
In a fit of absence, — such things have been! — if our friend proved weak
— What's the phrase? — corrected fortune! Look into the case, at least!"
Who dared interpose between the altar's victim and the priest?
Yet he spared me! You eleven! Whosoever, all or each,
To the disadvantage of the man who spared me, utters speech
— To his face, behind his back, — that speaker has to do with me:
Me who promise, if positions change and mine the chance should be,
Not to imitate your friend and waive advantage!'

"Twenty-five
Years ago this matter happened: and 't is certain," added Clive,

"Never, to my knowledge, did Sir Cocky have a single breath
Breathed against him: lips were closed throughout his life, or since his death,
For if he be dead or living I can tell no more than you.
All I know is — Cocky had one chance more; how he used it, — grew
Out of such unlucky habits, or relapsed, and back again
Brought the late-ejected devil with a score more in his train, —
That's for you to judge. Reprieval I procured, at any rate.
Ugh — the memory of that minute's fear makes goose-flesh rise! Why prate
Longer? You've my story, there's your instance: fear I did, you see!"

"Well" — I hardly kept from laughing — "if I see it, thanks must be
Wholly to your Lordship's candor. Not that — in a common case —
When a bully caught at cheating thrusts a pistol in one's face,
I should underrate, believe me, such a trial to the nerve!
'T is no joke, at one-and-twenty, for a youth to stand nor swerve.
Fear I naturally look for — unless, of all men alive,
I am forced to make exception when I come to Robert Clive.
Since at Arcot, Plassy, elsewhere, he and death — the whole world knows —
Came to somewhat closer quarters."

Quarters? Had we come to blows,
Clive and I, you had not wondered — up he sprang so, out he rapped
Such a round of oaths — no matter! I'll endeavor to adapt
To our modern usage words he — well, 't was friendly license — flung
At me like so many fire-balls, fast as he could wag his tongue.

"You — a soldier? You — at Plassy? Yours the faculty to nick
Instantaneously occasion when your foe, if lightning-quick,
— At his mercy, at his malice, — has you, through some stupid inch
Undefended in your bulwark? Thus laid open, — not to flinch
— That needs courage, you'll concede me. Then, look here! Suppose the man,
Checking his advance, his weapon still extended, not a span
Distant from my temple, — curse him! — quietly had bade me 'There!
Keep your life, calumniator! — worthless life I freely spare:
Mine you freely would have taken — murdered me and my good fame
Both at once — and all the better! Go, and thank your own bad aim
Which permits me to forgive you!' What if, with such words as these,
He had cast away his weapon? How should I have borne me, please?

Nay, I 'll spare you pains and tell you. This, and only this, remained —
Pick his weapon up and use it on myself. I so had gained
Sleep the earlier, leaving England probably to pay on still
Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the Frenchman's will."

"Such the turn," said I, "the matter takes with you? Then I abate
— No, by not one jot nor tittle, — of your act my estimate.
Fear — I wish I could detect there: courage fronts me, plain enough —
Call it desperation, madness — never mind! for here 's in rough
Why, had mine been such a trial, fear had overcome disgrace.
True, disgrace were hard to bear: but such a rush against God's face
— None of that for me, Lord Plassy, since I go to church at times,
Say the creed my mother taught me! Many years in foreign climes
Rub some marks away — not all, though! We poor sinners reach life's brink,
Overlook what rolls beneath it, recklessly enough, but think
There 's advantage in what 's left us — ground to stand on, time to call
'Lord, have mercy!' ere we topple over — do not leap, that 's all!"

Oh, he made no answer, — re-absorbed into his cloud. I caught

Something like "Yes — courage: only fools will call it fear."
If aught
Comfort you, my great unhappy hero Clive, in that I heard,
Next week, how your own hand dealt you doom, and uttered just the word
"Fearfully courageous!" — this, be sure, and nothing else I groaned.
I'm no Clive, nor parson either: Clive's worst deed — we'll hope condoned.

MULÉYKEH.

If a stranger passed the tent of Hóseyn, he cried "A churl's!"
Or haply "God help the man who has neither salt nor bread!"
— "Nay," would a friend exclaim, "he needs nor pity nor scorn
More than who spends small thought on the shore-sand, picking pearls,
— Holds but in light esteem the seed-sort, bears instead
On his breast a moon-like prize, some orb which of night makes morn.

"What if no flocks and herds enrich the son of Sinán?
They went when his tribe was mulct, ten thousand camels the due,
Blood-value paid perforce for a murder done of old.
'God gave them, let them go! But never since time began,
Muléykeh, peerless mare, owned master the match of you,

And you are my prize, my Pearl: I laugh at men's land and gold!'

"So in the pride of his soul laughs Hóseyn — and right, I say.
Do the ten steeds run a race of glory? Outstripping all,
Ever Muléykeh stands first steed at the victor's staff.
Who started, the owner's hope, gets shamed and named, that day.
'Silence,' or, last but one, is 'The Cuffed,' as we use to call
Whom the paddock's lord thrusts forth. Right, Hóseyn, I say, to laugh!"

"Boasts he Muléykeh the Pearl?" the stranger replies: "Be sure
On him I waste nor scorn nor pity, but lavish both
On Duhl the son of Sheybán, who withers away in heart
For envy of Hóseyn's luck. Such sickness admits no cure.
A certain poet has sung, and sealed the same with an oath,
'For the vulgar — flocks and herds! The Pearl is a prize apart.'"

Lo, Duhl the son of Sheybán comes riding to Hóseyn's tent,
And he casts his saddle down, and enters and "Peace!" bids he.
"You are poor, I know the cause: my plenty shall mend the wrong.
'T is said of your Pearl — the price of a hundred camels spent

In her purchase were scarce ill paid: such prudence is
far from me
Who proffer a thousand. Speak! Long parley may
last too long."

Said Hóseyn "You feed young beasts a many, of
famous breed,
Slit-eared, unblemished, fat, true offspring of Múzen-
nem:
There stumbles no weak-eyed she in the line as it
climbs the hill.
But I love Muléykeh's face: her forefront whitens indeed
Like a yellowish wave's cream-crest. Your camels —
go gaze on them!
Her fetlock is foam-splashed too. Myself am the
richer still."

A year goes by: lo, back to the tent again rides Duhl.
"You are open-hearted, ay — moist-handed, a very
prince.
Why should I speak of sale? Be the mare your simple
gift!
My son is pined to death for her beauty: my wife
prompts 'Fool,
Beg for his sake the Pearl! Be God the rewarder, since
God pays debts seven for one: who squanders on Him
shows thrift.'"

Said Hóseyn "God gives each man one life, like a
lamp, then gives
That lamp due measure of oil: lamp lighted — hold
high, wave wide
Its comfort for others to share! once quench it, what
help is left?

The oil of your lamp is your son: I shine while Muléykeh lives.
Would I beg your son to cheer my dark if Muléykeh died?
It is life against life: what good avails to the life-bereft?"

Another year, and — hist! What craft is it Duhl designs?
He alights not at the door of the tent as he did last time,
But, creeping behind, he gropes his stealthy way by the trench
Half-round till he finds the flap in the folding, for night combines
With the robber — and such is he: Duhl, covetous up to crime,
Must wring from Hóseyn's grasp the Pearl, by whatever the wrench.

"He was hunger-bitten, I heard: I tempted with half my store,
And a gibe was all my thanks. Is he generous like Spring dew?
Account the fault to me who chaffered with such an one!
He has killed, to feast chance comers, the creature he rode: nay, more —
For a couple of singing-girls his robe has he torn in two:
I will beg! Yet I nowise gained by the tale of my wife and son.

"I swear by the Holy House, my head will I never wash
Till I filch his Pearl away. Fair dealing I tried, then guile,
And now I resort to force. He said we must live or die:
Let him die, then, — let me live! Be bold — but not too rash!

I have found me a peeping-place: breast, bury your breathing while
I explore for myself! Now, breathe! He deceived me not, the spy!

"As he said — there lies in peace Hóseyn — how happy! Beside
Stands tethered the Pearl: thrice winds her headstall about his wrist:
'T is therefore he sleeps so sound — the moon through the roof reveals.
And, loose on his left, stands too that other, known far and wide,
Buhéyseh, her sister born: fleet is she yet ever missed
The winning tail's fire-flash a-stream past the thunderous heels.

"No less she stands saddled and bridled, this second, in case some thief
Should enter and seize and fly with the first, as I mean to do.
What then? The Pearl is the Pearl: once mount her we both escape."
Through the skirt-fold in glides Duhl, — so a serpent disturbs no leaf
In a bush as he parts the twigs entwining a nest: clean through,
He is noiselessly at his work: as he planned, he performs the rape.

He has set the tent-door wide, has buckled the girth, has clipped
The headstall away from the wrist he leaves thrice bound as before,

He springs on the Pearl, is launched on the desert like
bolt from bow.
Up starts our plundered man: from his breast though
the heart be ripped,
Yet his mind has the mastery: behold, in a minute
more,
He is out and off and away on Buhéyseh, whose worth
we know!

And Hóseyn — his blood turns flame, he has learned
long since to ride,
And Buhéyseh does her part, — they gain — they are
gaining fast
On the fugitive pair, and Duhl has Ed-Dárraj to cross
and quit,
And to reach the ridge El-Sabán, — no safety till that
be spied!
And Buhéyseh is, bound by bound, but a horse-length
off at last,
For the Pearl has missed the tap of the heel, the touch
of the bit.

She shortens her stride, she chafes at her rider the
strange and queer:
Buhéyseh is mad with hope — beat sister she shall and
must
Though Duhl, of the hand and heel so clumsy, she has
to thank.
She is near now, nose by tail — they are neck by croup
— joy! fear!
What folly makes Hóseyn shout "Dog Duhl, Damned
son of the Dust,
Touch the right ear and press with your foot my Pearl's
left flank!"

And Duhl was wise at the word, and Muléykeh as prompt perceived
Who was urging redoubled pace, and to hear him was to obey,
And a leap indeed gave she, and evanished for evermore.
And Hóseyn looked one long last look as who, all bereaved,
Looks, fain to follow the dead so far as the living may:
Then he turned Buhéyseh's neck slow homeward, weeping sore.

And, lo, in the sunrise, still sat Hóseyn upon the ground
Weeping: and neighbors came, the tribesmen of Bénu-Asád
In the vale of green Er-Rass, and they questioned him of his grief;
And he told from first to last how, serpent-like, Duhl had wound
His way to the nest, and how Duhl rode like an ape, so bad!
And how Buhéyseh did wonders, yet Pearl remained with the thief.

And they jeered him, one and all: "Poor Hóseyn is crazed past hope!
How else had he wrought himself his ruin, in fortune's spite?
To have simply held the tongue were a task for a boy or girl,
And here were Muléykeh again, the eyed like an antelope,

The child of his heart by day, the wife of his breast by night!" —
"And the beaten in speed!" wept Hóseyn: "You never have loved my Pearl."

PIETRO OF ABANO.

Petrus Aponensis — there was a magician!
When that strange adventure happened, which I mean to tell my hearers,
Nearly had he tried all trades — beside physician,
Architect, astronomer, astrologer, — or worse:
How else, as the old books warrant, was he able,
All at once, through all the world, to prove the promptest of appearers
Where was prince to cure, tower to build as high as Babel,
Star to name or sky-sign read, — yet pouch, for pains, a curse?

— Curse: for when a vagrant, — foot-sore travel-tattered,
Now a young man, now an old man, Turk or Arab, Jew or Gipsy, —
Proffered folk in passing — O for pay, what mattered? —
"I'll be doctor, I'll play builder, star I'll name — sign read!"
Soon as prince was cured, tower built, and fate predicted,
"Who may you be?" came the question; when he answered, "*Petrus ipse*,"

"Just as we divined!" cried folk — "A wretch convicted
Long ago of dealing with the devil — you indeed!"

So, they cursed him roundly, all his labor's payment,
Motioned him — the convalescent prince would — to vacate the presence:
Babylonians plucked his beard and tore his raiment,
Drove him from that tower he built: while, had he peered at stars,
Town howled "Stone the quack who styles our Dog-star — Sirius!"
Country yelled "Aroint the churl who prophesies we take no pleasance
Under vine and fig-tree, since the year's delirious,
Bears no crop of any kind, — all through the planet Mars!"

Straightway would the whilom youngster grow a grisard,
Or, as case might hap, the hoary eld drop off and show a stripling.
Town and country groaned — indebted to a wizard!
"Curse — nay, kick and cuff him — fit requital of his pains!
Gratitude in word or deed were wasted truly!
Rather make the Church amends by crying out on, cramping, crippling
One who, on pretence of serving man, serves duly
Man's arch foe: not ours, be sure, but Satan's — his the gains!"

Peter grinned and bore it, such disgraceful usage:
Somehow, cuffs and kicks and curses seem ordained his like to suffer:

Prophet's pay with Christians, now as in the Jews' age,
Still is — stoning: so, he meekly took his wage and went,
— Safe again was found ensconced in those old quarters,
Padua's blackest blindest by-street, — none the worse, nay, somewhat tougher:
"Calculating," quoth he, "soon I join the martyrs,
Since, who magnify my lore on burning me are bent." [1]

Therefore, on a certain evening, to his alley
Peter slunk, all bruised and broken, sore in body, sick in spirit,
Just escaped from Cairo where he launched a galley
Needing neither sails nor oars nor help of wind or tide,
— Needing but the fume of fire to set a-flying
Wheels like mad which whirled you quick — North, South, where'er you pleased require it, —
That is — would have done so had not priests come prying,
Broke his engine up and bastinadoed him beside.

As he reached his lodging, stopped there unmolested,
(Neighbors feared him, urchins fled him, few were bold enough to follow)

1 "Studiando le mie cifre col compasso,
Rilevo che sarò presto sotterra,
Perchè del mio saper si fa gran chiasso,
E gl' ignoranti m' hanno mosso guerra."

Said to have been found in a well at Abano in the last century. They were extemporaneously Englished thus: not as Father Prout chose to prefer them: —

Studying my ciphers with the compass,
I reckon — I soon shall be below-ground;
Because of my lore folk make great rumpus,
And war on myself makes each dull ogue round. — R. B.

While his fumbling fingers tried the lock and tested
Once again the queer key's virtue, oped the sullen door, —
Some one plucked his sleeve, cried "Master, pray your pardon!
Grant a word to me who patient wait you in your archway's hollow!
Hard on you men's hearts are: be not your heart hard on
Me who kiss your garment's hem, O Lord of magic lore!

"Mage — say I, who no less, scorning tittle-tattle,
To the vulgar give no credence when they prate of Peter's magic,
Deem his art brews tempest, hurts the crops and cattle,
Hinders fowls from laying eggs and worms from spinning silk,
Rides upon a he-goat, mounts at need a broomstick:
While the price he pays for this (so turns to comic what was tragic)
Is — he may not drink — dreads like the Day of Doom's tick —
One poor drop of sustenance ordained mere men — that's milk!

"Tell such tales to Padua! Think me no such dullard!
Not from these benighted parts did I derive my breath and being!
I am from a land whose cloudless skies are colored
Livelier, suns orb largelier, airs seem incense, — while, on earth —
What, instead of grass, our fingers and our thumbs cull,

Proves true moly! sounds and sights there help the body's hearing, seeing,
Till the soul grows godlike: brief, — you front no numskull
Shaming by ineptitude the Greece that gave him birth!

"Mark within my eye its iris mystic-lettered —
That 's my name! and note my ear — its swan-shaped cavity, my emblem!
Mine 's the swan-like nature born to fly unfettered
Over land and sea in search of knowledge — food for song.
Art denied the vulgar! Geese grow fat on barley,
Swans require ethereal provend, undesirous to resemble 'em —
Soar to seek Apollo, — favored with a parley
Such as, Master, you grant me — who will not hold you long.

"Leave to learn to sing — for that your swan petitions:
Master, who possess the secret, say not nay to such a suitor!
All I ask is — bless mine, purest of ambitions!
Grant me leave to make my kind wise, free, and happy! How?
Just by making me — as you are mine — their model!
Geese have goose-thoughts: make a swan their teacher first, then co-adjutor, —
Let him introduce swan-notions to each noddle, —
Geese will soon grow swans, and men become what I am now!

"That 's the only magic — had but fools discernment,
Could they probe and pass into the solid through the soft and seeming!

Teach me such true magic — now and no adjournment!
Teach your art of making fools subserve the man of mind!
Magic is the power we men of mind should practise,
Draw fools to become our drudges, docile henceforth, never dreaming —
While they do our hests for fancied gain — the fact is
What they toil and moil to get proves falsehood: truth 's behind!

"See now! you conceive some fabric — say, a mansion
Meet for monarch's pride and pleasure: this is truth — a thought has fired you,
Made you fain to give some cramped concept expansion,
Put your faculty to proof, fulfil your nature's task.
First you fascinate the monarch's self: he fancies
He it was devised the scheme you execute as he inspired you:
He in turn sets slaving insignificances
Toiling, moiling till your structure stands there — all you ask!

"Soon the monarch 's known for what he was — a ninny:
Soon the rabble-rout leave labor, take their work-day wage and vanish:
Soon the late puffed bladder, pricked, shows lank and skinny —
'Who was its inflator?' ask we, 'whose the giant lungs?'
Petri en pulmones! What though men prove ingrates?
Let them — so they stop at crucifixion — buffet, ban and banish!

Peter's power 's apparent: human praise — its din grates
Harsh as blame on ear unused to aught save angels' tongues.

"Ay, there have been always, since our world existed,
Mages who possessed the secret — needed but to stand still, fix eye
On the foolish mortal: straight was he enlisted
Soldier, scholar, servant, slave — no matter for the style!
Only through illusion; ever what seemed profit —
Love or lucre — justified obedience to the *Ipse dixi:*
Work done — palace reared from pavement up to soffit —
Was it strange if builders smelt out cheating all the while?

"Let them pelt and pound, bruise, bray you in a mortar!
What 's the odds to you who seek reward of quite another nature?
You 've enrolled your name where sages of your sort are,
— Michael of Constantinople, Hans of Halberstadt!
Nay and were you nameless, still you 've your conviction
You it was and only you — what signifies the nomenclature? —
Ruled the world in fact, though how you ruled be fiction
Fit for fools: true wisdom's magic you — if e'er man — had 't!

"But perhaps you ask me 'Since each ignoramus
While he profits by such magic persecutes the benefactor,

What should I expect but — once I render famous
You as Michael, Hans and Peter — just one ingrate more?
If the vulgar prove thus, whatsoe'er the pelf be,
Pouched through my beneficence — and doom me dungeoned, chained, or racked, or
Fairly burned outright — how grateful will yourself be
When, his secret gained, you match your — master just before?'

"That 's where I await you! Please, revert a little!
What do folk report about you if not this — which, though chimeric,
Still, as figurative, suits you to a tittle —
That, — although the elements obey your nod and wink,
Fades or flowers the herb you chance to smile or sigh at,
While your frown bids earth quake palled by obscuration atmospheric, —
Brief, although through nature naught resists your *fiat*,
There 's yet one poor substance mocks you — milk you may not drink!

"Figurative language! Take my explanation!
Fame with fear, and hate with homage, these your art procures in plenty.
All 's but daily dry bread: what makes moist the ration?
Love, the milk that sweetens man his meal — alas, you lack:
I am he who, since he fears you not, can love you.
Love is born of heart not mind, *de corde natus haud de mente;*
Touch my heart and love 's yours, sure as shines above you

Sun by day and star by night though earth should go
to wrack!

"Stage by stage you lift me — kiss by kiss I hallow
Whose but your dear hand my helper, punctual as at
each new impulse
I approach my aim? Shell chipped, the eaglet callow
Needs a parent's pinion-push to quit the eyrie's edge:
But once fairly launched forth, denizen of æther,
While each effort sunward bids the blood more freely
through each limb pulse,
Sure the parent feels, as gay they soar together,
Fully are all pains repaid when love redeems its pledge!"

Then did Peter's tristful visage lighten somewhat,
Vent a watery smile as though inveterate mistrust were
thawing.
"Well, who knows?" he slow broke silence. "Mortals — come what
Come there may — are still the dupes of hope there 's
luck in store.
Many scholars seek me, promise mounts and marvels:
Here stand I to witness how they step 'twixt me and
clapperclawing!
Dry bread, — that I've gained me: truly I should
starve else:
But of milk, no drop was mine! Well, shuffle cards
once more!"

At the word of promise thus implied, our stranger —
What can he but cast his arms, in rapture of embrace,
round Peter?
"Hold! I choke!" the mage grunts. "Shall I in
the manger

Any longer play the dog? Approach, my calf, and feed!
Bene . . . won't you wait for grace?" But sudden incense
Wool-white, serpent-solid, curled up — perfume growing sweet and sweeter
Till it reached the young man's nose and seemed to win sense
Soul and all from out his brain through nostril: yes, indeed!

Presently the young man rubbed his eyes. "Where am I?
Too much bother over books! Some reverie has proved amusing.
What did Peter prate of? 'Faith, my brow is clammy!
How my head throbs, how my heart thumps! Can it be I swooned?
Oh, I spoke my speech out — cribbed from Plato's tractate,
Dosed him with 'the Fair and Good,' swore — Dog of Egypt — I was choosing
Plato's way to serve men! What's the hour? Exact eight!
Home now, and to-morrow never mind how Plato mooned!

"Peter has the secret! Fair and Good are products
(So he said) of Foul and Evil: one must bring to pass the other.
Just as poisons grow drugs, steal through sundry odd ducts
Doctors name, and ultimately issue safe and changed.
You 'd abolish poisons, treat disease with dainties
Such as suit the sound and sane? With all such kickshaws vain you pother!

Arsenic 's the stuff puts force into the faint eyes,
Opium sets the brain to rights — by cark and care deranged.

"What, he 's safe within door? — would escape — no question —
Thanks, since thanks and more I owe, and mean to pay in time befitting.
What most presses now is — after night's digestion,
Peter, of thy precepts! — promptest practice of the same.
Let me see! The wise man, first of all, scorns riches:
But to scorn them must obtain them: none believes in his permitting
Gold to lie ungathered: who picks up, then pitches
Gold away — philosophizes: none disputes his claim.

"So with worldly honors: 't is by abdicating,
Incontestably he proves he could have kept the crown discarded.
Sulla cuts a figure, leaving off dictating:
Simpletons laud private life? 'The grapes are sour,' laugh we.
So, again — but why continue? All 's tumultuous
Here: my head 's a-whirl with knowledge. Speedily shall be rewarded
He who taught me! Greeks prove ingrates? So insult you us?
When your teaching bears its first-fruits, Peter — wait and see!"

As the word, the deed proved; ere a brief year's passage,
Fop — that fool he made the jokes on — now he made the jokes for, *gratis:*

Hunks — that hoarder, long left lonely in his crass age —
Found now one appreciative deferential friend:
Powder-paint-and-patch, Hag Jezebel — recovered,
Strange to say, the power to please, got courtship till she cried *Jam satis!*
Fop be-flattered, Hunks be-friended, Hag be-lovered —
Nobody o'erlooked, save God — he soon attained his end.

As he lounged at ease one morning in his villa,
(Hag's the dowry) estimated (Hunks' bequest) his coin in coffer,
Mused on how a fool's good word (Fop's word) could fill a
Social circle with his praise, promote him man of mark, —
All at once — "An old friend fain would see your Highness!"
There stood Peter, skeleton and scarecrow, plain writ *Phi-lo-so-pher*
In the woe-worn face — for yellowness and dryness,
Parchment — with a pair of eyes — one hope their feeble spark.

"Did I counsel rightly? Have you, in accordance,
Prospered greatly, dear my pupil? Sure, at just the stage I find you,
When your hand may draw me forth from the mad war-dance
Savages are leading round your master — down, not dead.
Padua wants to burn me: balk them, let me linger
Life out — rueful though its remnant — hid in some safe hole behind you!

Prostrate here I lie: quick, help with but a finger
Lest I house in safety's self — a tombstone o'er my head!

"Lodging, bite and sup, with — now and then — a copper
— Alms for any poorer still, if such there be, — is all my asking.
Take me for your bedesman, — nay, if you think proper,
Menial merely, — such my perfect passion for repose!
Yes, from out your plenty Peter craves a pittance
— Leave to thaw his frozen hands before the fire where-at you're basking!
Double though your debt were, grant this boon — remittance
He proclaims of obligation: 'tis himself that owes!"

"Venerated Master — can it be, such treatment
Learning meets with, magic fails to guard you from, by all appearance?
Strange! for, as you entered, — what the famous feat meant,
I was full of, — why you reared that fabric, Padua's boast.
Nowise for man's pride, man's pleasure, did you slyly
Raise it, but man's seat of rule whereby the world should soon have clearance
(Happy world) from such a rout as now so vilely
Handles you — and hampers me, for which I grieve the most.

"Since if it got wind you now were my familiar,
How could I protect you — nay, defend myself against the rabble?
Wait until the mob, now masters, willy-nilly are

Servants as they should be: then has gratitude full play!
Surely this experience shows how unbefitting
'T is that minds like mine should rot in ease and plenty. Geese may gabble,
Gorge, and keep the ground: but swans are soon for quitting
Earthly fare — as fain would I, your swan, if taught the way.

"Teach me, then, to rule men, have them at my pleasure!
Solely for their good, of course, — impart a secret worth rewarding,
Since the proper life's-prize! Tantalus's treasure
Aught beside proves, vanishes and leaves no trace at all.
Wait awhile, nor press for payment prematurely!
Over-haste defrauds you. Thanks! since, — even while I speak, — discarding
Sloth and vain delights, I learn how — swiftly, surely —
Magic sways the sceptre, wears the crown and wields the ball!

"Gone again — what, is he? 'Faith, he's soon disposed of!
Peter's precepts work already, put within my lump their leaven!
Ay, we needs must don glove would we pluck the rose — doff
Silken garment would we climb the tree and take its fruit.
Why sharp thorn, rough rind? To keep unviolated

Either prize! We garland us, we mount from earth
to feast in heaven,
Just because exist what once we estimated
Hindrances which, better taught, as helps we now
compute.

"Foolishly I turned disgusted from my fellows!
Pits of ignorance — to fill, and heaps of prejudice —
to level —
Multitudes in motley, whites and blacks and yellows —
What a hopeless task it seemed to discipline the host!
Now I see my error. Vices act like virtues
— Not alone because they guard — sharp thorns —
the rose we first dishevel,
Not because they scrape, scratch — rough rind —
through the dirt-shoes
Bare feet cling to bole with, while the half-mooned
boot we boast.

"No, my aim is nobler, more disinterested!
Man shall keep what seemed to thwart him, since it
proves his true assistance,
Leads to ascertaining which head is the best head,
Would he crown his body, rule its members — lawless
else.
Ignorant the horse stares, by deficient vision
Takes a man to be a monster, lets him mount, then,
twice the distance
Horse could trot unridden, gallops — dream Elysian! —
Dreaming that his dwarfish guide 's a giant, — jockeys
tell 's."

Brief, so worked the spell, he promptly had a riddance:
Heart and brain no longer felt the pricks which passed
for conscience-scruples:

Free henceforth his feet, — *Per Bacco*, how they did dance
Merrily through lets and checks that stopped the way before!
Politics the prize now, — such adroit adviser,
Opportune suggester, with the tact that triples and quadruples
Merit in each measure, — never did the Kaiser
Boast a subject such a statesman, friend, and something more!

As he, up and down, one noonday, paced his closet
— Council o'er, each spark (his hint) blown flame, by colleagues' breath applauded,
Strokes of statecraft hailed with "*Salomo si nôsset!*"
(His the nostrum) — every throw for luck come double-six, —
As he, pacing, hugged himself in satisfaction,
Thump — the door went. "What, the Kaiser? By none else were I defrauded
Thus of well-earned solace. Since 't is fate's exaction, —
Enter, Liege my Lord! Ha, Peter, you here? *Teneor vix!*"

"Ah, Sir, none the less, contain you, nor wax irate!
You so lofty, I so lowly, — vast the space which yawns between us!
Still, methinks, you — more than ever — at a high rate
Needs must prize poor Peter's secret since it lifts you thus.
Grant me now the boon whereat before you boggled!
Ten long years your march has moved — one triumph — (though *e* 's short) — *bactênus*,

While I down and down disastrously have joggled
Till I pitch against Death's door, the true *Nec Ultra Plus.*

"Years ago — some ten 't is — since I sought for shelter,
Craved in your whole house a closet, out of all your means a comfort.
Now you soar above these: as is gold to spelter
So is power — you urged with reason — paramount to wealth.
Power you boast in plenty: let it grant me refuge!
Houseroom now is out of question: find for me some stronghold — some fort —
Privacy wherein, immured, shall this blind deaf huge
Monster of a mob let stay the soul I 'd save by stealth!

"Ay, for all too much with magic have I tampered!
— Lost the world, and gained, I fear, a certain place I 'm to describe loth!
Still, if prayer and fasting tame the pride long pampered,
Mercy may be mine: amendment never comes too late.
How can I amend beset by cursers, kickers?
Pluck this brand from out the burning! Once away, I take my Bible-oath,
Never more — so long as life's weak lamp-flame flickers —
No, not once I 'll tease you, but in silence bear my fate!"

"Gently, good my Genius, Oracle unerring!
Strange now! can you guess on what — as in you peeped — it was I pondered?

You and I are both of one mind in preferring
Power to wealth, but — here 's the point — what sort
of power, I ask ?
Ruling men is vulgar, easy and ignoble :
Rid yourself of conscience, quick you have at beck and
call the fond herd.
But who wields the crozier, down may fling the crow-
bill :
That 's the power I covet now ; soul's sway o'er souls
— my task !

" 'Well but,' you object, 'you have it, who by
glamour
Dress up lies to look like truths, mask folly in the garb
of reason :
Your soul acts on theirs, sure, when the people clamor,
Hold their peace, now fight now fondle, — earwigged
through the brains.'
Possibly ! but still the operation 's mundane,
Grosser than a taste demands which — craving manna
— kecks at peason —
Power o'er men by wants material : why should one
deign
Rule by sordid hopes and fears — a grunt for all one's
pains ?

" No, if men must praise me, let them praise to pur-
pose !
Would we move the world, not earth but heaven must
be our fulcrum — *pou sto !*
Thus I seek to move it : Master, why intérpose —
Balk my climbing close on what 's the ladder's top-
most round ?
Statecraft 't is I step from : when by priestcraft hoisted

Up to where my foot may touch the highest rung
which fate allows toe,
Then indeed ask favor! On you shall be foisted
No excuse: I 'll pay my debt, each penny of the
pound!

"Ho, my knaves without there! Lead this worthy
downstairs!
No farewell, good Paul — nay, Peter — what 's your
name remembered rightly?
Come, he 's humble: out another would have flounced
— airs
Suitors often give themselves when our sort bow them
forth.
Did I touch his rags? He surely kept his distance:
Yet, there somehow passed to me from him — wher-
e'er the virtue might lie —
Something that inspires my soul — Oh, by assistance
Doubtlessly of Peter! — still, he 's worth just what
he 's worth!

"'T is my own soul soars now: soaring — how? By
crawling!
I 'll to Rome, before Rome's feet the temporal-supreme
lay prostrate!
'Hands' (I 'll say) 'proficient once in pulling, hauling
This and that way men as I was minded — feet now
clasp!'
Ay, the Kaiser's self has wrung them in his fervor!
Now — they only sue to slave for Rome, nor at one
doit the cost rate.
Rome's adopted child — no bone, no muscle, nerve or
Sinew of me but I 'll strain, though out my life I
gasp!"

As he stood one evening proudly — (he had traversed
Rome on horseback — peerless pageant! — claimed the
Lateran as new Pope) —
Thinking "All's attained now! Pontiff! Who
could have erst
Dreamed of my advance so far when, some ten years
ago,
I embraced devotion, grew from priest to bishop,
Gained the Purple, bribed the Conclave, got the Two-
thirds, saw my coop ope,
Came out — what Rome hails me! O were there a
wish-shop,
Not one wish more would I purchase — lord of all
below!

"Ha! — who dares intrude now — puts aside the arras?
What, old Peter, here again, at such a time, in such a
presence?
Satan sends this plague back merely to embarrass
Me who enter on my office — little needing you!
'Faith, I'm touched myself by age, but you look
Tithon!
Were it vain to seek of you the sole prize left —
rejuvenescence?
Well, since flesh is grass which Time must lay his
scythe on,
Say your say and so depart and make no more ado!"

Peter faltered — coughing first by way of prologue —
"Holiness, your help comes late: a death at ninety
little matters.
Padua, build poor Peter's pyre now, on log roll log,
Burn away — I've lived my day! Yet here's the
sting in death —

I've an author's pride: I want my Book's survival:
See, I 've hid it in my breast to warm me mid the rags and tatters!
Save it — tell next age your Master had no rival!
Scholar's debt discharged in full, be 'Thanks' my latest breath!"

"Faugh, the frowsy bundle — scribblings harum-scarum
Scattered o'er a dozen sheepskins! What's the name of this farrago?
Ha — '*Conciliator Differentiarum*' —
Man and book may burn together, cause the world no loss!
Stop — what else? A tractate — eh, '*De Speciebus Ceremonialis Ma-gi-æ?*' I dream sure! Hence, away, go,
Wizard, — quick avoid me! Vain you clasp my knee, buss
Hand that bears the Fisher's ring or foot that boasts the Cross!

"Help! The old magician clings like an octopus!
Ah, you rise now — fuming, fretting, frowning, if I read your features!
Frown, who cares? We 're Pope — once Pope, you can't unpope us!
Good — you muster up a smile: that's better! Still so brisk?
All at once grown youthful? But the case is plain! Ass —
Here I dally with the fiend, yet know the Word — compels all creatures

Earthly, heavenly, hellish. *Apage, Sathanas*
Dicam verbum Salomonis —" "*— dicite!*" When
— whisk! —

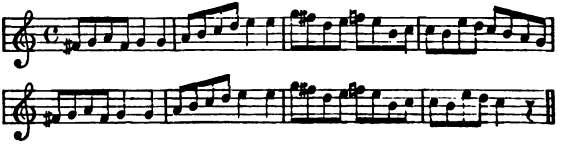
What was changed? The stranger gave his eyes a
rubbing:
There smiled Peter's face turned back a moment at
him o'er the shoulder,
As the black door shut, bang! "So he 'scapes a
drubbing!"
(Quoth a boy who, unespied, had stopped to hear the
talk.)
"That's the way to thank these wizards when they
bid men
Benedicite! What ails you? You, a man, and yet
no bolder?
Foreign Sir, you look but foolish!" "*Idmen, idmen!*"
Groaned the Greek. "O Peter, cheese at last I know
from chalk!"

Peter lived his life out, menaced yet no martyr,
Knew himself the mighty man he was — such knowl-
edge all his guerdon,
Left the world a big book — people but in part err
When they style a true *Scientiæ Com-pen-di-um:*
"*Admirationem incutit*" they sourly
Smile, as fast they shut the folio which myself was
somehow spurred on
Once to ope: but love — life's milk which daily, hourly,
Blockheads lap — O Peter, still thy taste of love's to
come!

Greek, was your ambition likewise doomed to failure?
True, I find no record you wore purple, walked with
axe and fasces,

Played some antipope's part: still, friend, don't turn tail, you're
Certain, with but these two gifts, to gain earth's prize in time!
Cleverness uncurbed by conscience — if you ransacked
Peter's book you'd find no potent spell like these to rule the masses;
Nor should want example, had I not to transact
Other business. Go your ways, you'll thrive! So ends my rhyme.

When these parts Tiberius — not yet Cæsar — travelled,
Passing Padua, he consulted Padua's Oracle of Geryon
(God three-headed, thrice wise) just to get unravelled
Certain tangles of his future. "Fling at Abano
Golden dice," it answered: "dropt within the fount there,
Note what sum the pips present!" And still we see each die, the very one,
Turn up, through the crystal, — read the whole account there
Where 't is told by Suetonius, — each its highest throw.

Scarce the sportive fancy-dice I fling show "Venus:"
Still — for love of that dear land which I so oft in dreams revisit —
I have — oh, not sung! but lilted (as — between us —
Grows my lazy custom) this its legend. What the lilt?

DOCTOR ——.

A Rabbi told me: On the day allowed
Satan for carping at God's rule, he came,
Fresh from our earth, to brave the angel-crowd.

"What is the fault now?" "This I find to blame:
Many and various are the tongues below,
Yet all agree in one speech, all proclaim

"'Hell has no might to match what earth can show:
Death is the strongest-born of Hell, and yet
Stronger than Death is a Bad Wife, we know.'

"Is it a wonder if I fume and fret—
Robbed of my rights, since Death am I, and mine
The style of Strongest? Men pay Nature's debt

"Because they must at my demand; decline
To pay it henceforth surely men will please,
Provided husbands with bad wives combine

"To baffle Death. Judge between me and these!"
"Thyself shalt judge. Descend to earth in shape
Of mortal, marry, drain from froth to lees

"The bitter draught, then see if thou escape
Concluding, with men sorrowful and sage,
A Bad Wife's strength Death's self in vain would ape!"

How Satan entered on his pilgrimage,
Conformed himself to earthly ordinance,
Wived and played husband well from youth to age

Intrepidly — I leave untold, advance
Through many a married year until I reach
A day when — of his father's countenance

The very image, like him too in speech
As well as thought and deed, — the union's fruit
Attained maturity. "I needs must teach

"My son a trade: but trade, such son to suit,
Needs seeking after. He a man of war?
Too cowardly! A lawyer wins repute —

"Having to toil and moil, though — both which are
Beyond this sluggard. There's Divinity:
No, that's my own bread-winner — that be far

"From my poor offspring! Physic? Ha, we'll try
If this be practicable. Where's my wit?
Asleep? — since, now I come to think . . . Ay, ay!

"Hither, my son! Exactly have I hit
On a profession for thee. *Medicus* —
Behold, thou art appointed! Yea, I spit

"Upon thine eyes, bestow a virtue thus
That henceforth not this human form I wear
Shalt thou perceive alone, but — one of us

"By privilege — thy fleshly sight shall bear
Me in my spirit-person as I walk
The world and take my prey appointed there.

"Doctor once dubbed — what ignorance shall balk
Thy march triumphant? Diagnose the gout
As colic, and prescribe it cheese for chalk —

"No matter! All's one: cure shall come about
And win thee wealth — fees paid with such a roar
Of thanks and praise alike from lord and lout

" As never stunned man's ears on earth before.
'How may this be?' Why, that 's my sceptic! Soon
Truth will corrupt thee, soon thou doubt'st no more!

" Why is it I bestow on thee the boon
Of recognizing me the while I go
Invisibly among men, morning, noon

" And night, from house to house, and — quick or slow —
Take my appointed prey? They summon thee
For help, suppose: obey the summons! so!

" Enter, look round! Where 's Death? Know — I am he,
Satan who work all evil: I who bring
Pain to the patient in whate'er degree.

" I, then, am there: first glance thine eye shall fling
Will find me — whether distant or at hand,
As I am free to do my spiriting.

" At such mere first glance thou shalt understand
Wherefore I reach no higher up the room
Than door or window, when my form is scanned.

" Howe'er friends' faces please to gather gloom,
Bent o'er the sick, — howe'er himself desponds, —
In such case Death is not the sufferer's doom.

" Contrariwise, do friends rejoice my bonds
Are broken, does the captive in his turn
Crow 'Life shall conquer'? Nip these foolish fronds

" Of hope a-sprout, if haply thou discern
Me at the head — my victim's head, be sure!
Forth now! This taught thee, little else to learn!"

And forth he went. Folk heard him ask demure
"How do you style this ailment? (There he peeps,
My father, through the arras!) Sirs, the cure

"Is plain as A. B. C.! Experience steeps
Blossoms of pennyroyal half an hour
In sherris. *Sumat!* — Lo, how sound he sleeps —

"The subject you presumed was past the power
Of Galen to relieve!" Or else "How's this?
Why call for help so tardily? Clouds lour

"Portentously indeed, Sirs! (Naught's amiss:
He's at the bed-foot merely.) Still, the storm
May pass averted — not by quacks, I wis,

"Like you, my masters! You, forsooth, perform
A miracle? Stand, sciolists, aside!
Blood, ne'er so cold, at ignorance grows warm!"

Which boasting by result was justified,
Big as might words be: whether drugged or left
Drugless, the patient always lived, not died.

Great the heir's gratitude, so nigh bereft
Of all he prized in this world: sweet the smile
Of disconcerted rivals: "Cure? — say, theft

"From Nature in despite of Art — so style
This off-hand kill-or-cure work! You did much,
I had done more: folk cannot wait awhile!"

But did the case change? was it — "Scarcely such
The symptoms as to warrant our recourse
To your skill, Doctor! Yet since just a touch

"Of pulse, a taste of breath, has all the force
With you of long investigation claimed
By others, — tracks an ailment to its source

"Intuitively, — may we ask unblamed
What from this pimple you prognosticate?"
"Death!" was the answer, as he saw and named

The coucher by the sick man's head. "Too late
You send for my assistance. I am bold
Only by Nature's leave, and bow to Fate!

"Besides, you have my rivals: lavish gold!
How comfortably quick shall life depart
Cosseted by attentions manifold!

"One day, one hour ago, perchance my art
Had done some service. Since you have yourselves
Chosen — before the horse — to put the cart,

"Why, Sirs, the sooner that the sexton delves
Your patient's grave, the better! How you stare
— Shallow, for all the deep books on your shelves!

"Fare you well, fumblers!" Do I need declare
What name and fame, what riches recompensed
The Doctor's practice? Never anywhere

Such an adept as daily evidenced
Each new vaticination! Oh, not he
Like dolts who dallied with their scruples, fenced

With subterfuge, nor gave out frank and free
Something decisive! If he said "I save
The patient," saved he was: if "Death will be

"His portion," you might count him dead. Thus brave,
Behold our worthy, sans competitor
Throughout the country, on the architrave

Of Glory's temple golden-lettered for
Machaon *redivivus!* So, it fell
That, of a sudden, when the Emperor

Was smit by sore disease, I need not tell
If any other Doctor's aid was sought
To come and forthwith make the sick Prince well.

"He will reward thee as a monarch ought.
Not much imports the malady; but then,
He clings to life and cries like one distraught

"For thee — who, from a simple citizen,
Mayst look to rise in rank, — nay, haply wear
A medal with his portrait, — always when

"Recovery is quite accomplished. There!
Pass to the presence!" Hardly has he crossed
The chamber's threshold when he halts, aware

Of who stands sentry by the head. All 's lost.
"Sire, naught avails my art: you near the goal,
And end the race by giving up the ghost."

"How?" cried the monarch: "Names upon your roll
Of half my subjects rescued by your skill —
Old and young, rich and poor — crowd cheek by jowl

"And yet no room for mine? Be saved I will!
Why else am I earth's foremost potentate?
Add me to these and take as fee your fill

"Of gold — that point admits of no debate
Between us: save me, as you can and must, —
Gold, till your gown's pouch cracks beneath the
weight!"

This touched the Doctor. "Truly a home-thrust,
Parent, you will not parry! Have I dared
Entreat that you forego the meal of dust

"— Man that is snake's meat — when I saw prepared
Your daily portion? Never! Just this once,
Go from his head, then, — let his life be spared!"

Whisper met whisper in the gruff response
"Fool, I must have my prey: no inch I budge
From where thou see'st me thus myself ensconce."

"Ah," moaned the sufferer, "by thy look I judge
Wealth fails to tempt thee: what if honors prove
More efficacious? Naught to him I grudge

"Who saves me. Only keep my head above
The cloud that 's creeping round it — I 'll divide
My empire with thee! No? What 's left but — love?

"Does love allure thee? Well then, take as bride
My only daughter, fair beyond belief!
Save me — to-morrow shall the knot be tied!"

"Father, you hear him! Respite ne'er so brief
Is all I beg: go now and come again
Next day, for aught I care: respect the grief

"Mine will be if thy first-born sues in vain!"
"Fool, I must have my prey!" was all he got
In answer. But a fancy crossed his brain.

"I have it! Sire, methinks a meteor shot
Just now across the heavens and neutralized
Jove's salutary influence: 'neath the blot

"Plumb are you placed now: well that I surmised
The cause of failure! Knaves, reverse the bed!"
"Stay!" groaned the monarch, "I shall be capsized —

"Jolt — jolt — my heels uplift where late my head
Was lying — sure I'm turned right round at last!
What do you say now, Doctor?" Naught he said:

For why? With one brisk leap the Antic passed
From couch-foot back to pillow, — as before,
Lord of the situation. Long aghast

The Doctor gazed, then "Yet one trial more
Is left me" inwardly he uttered. "Shame
Upon thy flinty heart! Do I implore

"This trifling favor in the idle name
Of mercy to the moribund? I plead
The cause of all thou dost affect: my aim

"Befits my author! Why would I succeed?
Simply that by success I may promote
The growth of thy pet virtues — pride and greed.

"But keep thy favors! — curse thee! I devote
Henceforth my service to the other side.
No time to lose: the rattle's in his throat.

"So, — not to leave one last resource untried, —
Run to my house with all haste, somebody!
Bring me that knobstick thence, so often plied

"With profit by the astrologer — shall I
Disdain its help, the mystic Jacob's-Staff?
Sire, do but have the courage not to die

"Till this arrive! Let none of you dare laugh! 220
Though rugged its exterior, I have seen
That implement work wonders, send the chaff

"Quick and thick flying from the wheat — I mean,
By metaphor, a human sheaf it thrashed
Flail-like. Go fetch it! Or — a word between

"Just you and me, friend! — go bid, unabashed,
My mother, whom you 'll find there, bring the stick
Herself — herself, mind!" Out the lackey dashed

Zealous upon the errand. Craft and trick
Are meat and drink to Satan: and he grinned 230
— How else? — at an excuse so politic

For failure: scarce would Jacob's-Staff rescind
Fate's firm decree! And ever as he neared
The agonizing one, his breath like wind

Froze to the marrow, while his eye-flash seared
Sense in the brain up: closelier and more close
Pressing his prey, when at the door appeared

— Who but his Wife the Bad? Whereof one dose,
One grain, one mite of the medicament, 239
Sufficed him. Up he sprang. One word, too gross

To soil my lips with, — and through ceiling went
Somehow the Husband. "That a storm 's dispersed
We know for certain by the sulphury scent!

"Hail to the Doctor! Who but one so versed
In all Dame Nature's secrets had prescribed
The staff thus opportunely? Style him first

"And foremost of physicians!" "I've imbibed
Elixir surely," smiled the prince, — "have gained
New lease of life. Dear Doctor, how you bribed 249

"Death to forego me, boots not: you've obtained
My daughter and her dowry. Death, I've heard,
Was still on earth the strongest power that reigned,

"Except a Bad Wife!" Whereunto demurred
Nowise the Doctor, so refused the fee
— No dowry, no bad wife!

"You think absurd
This tale?" — the Rabbi added: "True, our Talmud
Boasts sundry such: yet — have our elders erred
In thinking there 's some water there, not all mud?"
I tell it, as the Rabbi told it me.

PAN AND LUNA.

Si credere dignum est. — *Georgic.* iii. 390.

O WORTHY of belief I hold it was,
Virgil, your legend in those strange three lines!
No question, that adventure came to pass
One black night in Arcadia: yes, the pines,
Mountains and valleys mingling made one mass
Of black with void black heaven: the earth's confines,
The sky's embrace, — below, above, around,
All hardened into black without a bound.

Fill up a swart stone chalice to the brim
With fresh-squeezed yet fast-thickening poppy-juice:
See how the sluggish jelly, late a-swim,
Turns marble to the touch of who would loose
The solid smooth, grown jet from rim to rim,
By turning round the bowl! So night can fuse
Earth with her all-comprising sky. No less,
Light, the least spark, shows air and emptiness.

And thus it proved when — diving into space,
Stript of all vapor, from each web of mist
Utterly film-free — entered on her race
The naked Moon, full-orbed antagonist
Of night and dark, night's dowry: peak to base,
Upstarted mountains, and each valley, kissed
To sudden life, lay silver-bright: in air
Flew she revealed, Maid-Moon with limbs all bare.

Still as she fled, each depth — where refuge seemed —
Opening a lone pale chamber, left distinct
Those limbs: mid still-retreating blue, she teemed
Herself with whiteness, — virginal, uncinct
By any halo save what finely gleamed
To outline not disguise her: heaven was linked
In one accord with earth to quaff the joy,
Drain beauty to the dregs without alloy.

Whereof she grew aware. What help? When, lo,
A succorable cloud with sleep lay dense:
Some pine-tree-top had caught it sailing slow,
And tethered for a prize: in evidence
Captive lay fleece on fleece of piled-up snow
Drowsily patient: flake-heaped how or whence,
The structure of that succorable cloud,
What matter? Shamed she plunged into its shroud.

Orbed — so the woman-figure poets call
Because of rounds on rounds — that apple-shaped
Head which its hair binds close into a ball
Each side the curving ears — that pure undraped
Pout of the sister paps — that . . . Once for all,
Say — her consummate circle thus escaped
With its innumerous circlets, sank absorbed,
Safe in the cloud — O naked Moon full-orbed!

But what means this? The downy swathes combine,
Conglobe, the smothery coy-caressing stuff
Curdles about her! Vain each twist and twine
Those lithe limbs try, encroached on by a fluff
Fitting as close as fits the dented spine
Its flexile ivory outside-flesh: enough!
The plumy drifts contract, condense, constringe,
Till she is swallowed by the feathery springe.

As when a pearl slips lost in the thin foam
Churned on a sea-shore, and, o'er-frothed, conceits
Herself safe-housed in Amphitrite's dome, —
If, through the bladdery wave-worked yeast, she meets
What most she loathes and leaps from, — elf from gnome
No gladlier, — finds that safest of retreats
Bubble about a treacherous hand wide ope
To grasp her — (divers who pick pearls so grope) —

So lay this Maid-Moon clasped around and caught
By rough red Pan, the god of all that tract:
He it was schemed the snare thus subtly wrought
With simulated earth-breath, — wool-tufts packed
Into a billowy wrappage. Sheep far-sought

For spotless shearings yield such: take the fact
As learned Virgil gives it, — how the breed
Whitens itself forever: yes, indeed!

If one forefather ram, though pure as chalk
From tinge on fleece, should still display a tongue
Black 'neath the beast's moist palate, prompt men balk
The propagating plague: he gets no young:
They rather slay him, — sell his hide to calk
Ships with, first steeped in pitch, — nor hands are wrung
In sorrow for his fate: protected thus,
The purity we love is gained for us.

So did Girl-moon, by just her attribute
Of unmatched modesty betrayed, lie trapped,
Bruised to the breast of Pan, half-god half-brute,
Raked by his bristly boar-sward while he lapped
— Never say, kissed her! that were to pollute
Love's language — which moreover proves unapt
To tell how she recoiled — as who finds thorns
Where she sought flowers — when, feeling, she touched
— horns!

Then — does the legend say? — first moon-eclipse
Happened, first swooning-fit which puzzled sore
The early sages? Is that why she dips
Into the dark, a minute and no more,
Only so long as serves her while she rips
The cloud's womb through and, faultless as before,
Pursues her way? No lesson for a maid
Left she, a maid herself thus trapped, betrayed?

Ha, Virgil? Tell the rest, you! "To the deep
Of his domain the wildwood, Pan forthwith

Called her, and so she followed" — in her sleep,
Surely? — "by no means spurning him." The myth
Explain who may! Let all else go, I keep
— As of a ruin just a monolith —
Thus much, one verse of five words, each a boon:
Arcadia, night, a cloud, Pan, and the moon.

"Touch him ne'er so lightly, into song he broke:
Soil so quick-receptive, — not one feather-seed,
Not one flower-dust fell but straight its fall awoke
Vitalizing virtue: song would song succeed
Sudden as spontaneous — prove a poet-soul!"

Indeed?
Rock's the song-soil rather, surface hard and bare:
Sun and dew their mildness, storm and frost their rage
Vainly both expend, — few flowers awaken there:
Quiet in its cleft broods — what the after age
Knows and names a pine, a nation's heritage.

JOCOSERIA.

1883.

WANTING is — what?
Summer redundant,
Blueness abundant,
— Where is the blot?
Beamy the world, yet a blank all the same,
— Framework which waits for a picture to frame:
What of the leafage, what of the flower?
Roses embowering with naught they embower!
Come then, complete incompletion, O comer,
Pant through the blueness, perfect the summer!
Breathe but one breath
Rose-beauty above,
And all that was death
Grows life, grows love,
Grows love!

DONALD.

"WILL you hear my story also,
— Huge Sport, brave adventure in plenty?"
The boys were a band from Oxford,
The oldest of whom was twenty.

The bothy we held carouse in
Was bright with fire and candle;
Tale followed tale like a merry-go-round
Whereof Sport turned the handle.

In our eyes and noses — turf-smoke:
  In our ears a tune from the trivet,
Whence "Boiling, boiling," the kettle sang,
  "And ready for fresh Glenlivet."

So, feat capped feat, with a vengeance:
  Truths, though, — the lads were loyal:
"Grouse, five score brace to the bag!
  Deer, ten hours' stalk of the Royal!"

Of boasting, not one bit, boys!
  Only there seemed to settle
Somehow above your curly heads,
  — Plain through the singing kettle,

Palpable through the cloud,
  As each new-puffed Havanna
Rewarded the teller's well-told tale, —
  This vaunt "To Sport — Hosanna!

"Hunt, fish, shoot,
  Would a man fulfil life's duty!
Not to the bodily frame alone
  Does Sport give strength and beauty,

"But character gains in — courage?
  Ay, Sir, and much beside it!
You don't sport, more's the pity:
  You soon would find, if you tried it,

"Good sportsman means good fellow,
  Sound-hearted he, to the centre;
Your mealy-mouthed mild milksops
  — There's where the rot can enter!

"There's where the dirt will breed,
The shabbiness Sport would banish!
Oh no, Sir, no! In your honored case
All such objections vanish.

"'T is known how hard you studied:
A Double-First — what, the jigger!
Give me but half your Latin and Greek,
I 'll never again touch trigger!

"Still, tastes are tastes, allow me!
Allow, too, where there's keenness
For Sport, there's little likelihood
Of a man's displaying meanness!"

So, put on my mettle, I interposed.
"Will you hear my story?" quoth I.
"Never mind how long since it happed,
I sat, as we sit, in a bothy;

"With as merry a band of mates, too,
Undergrads all on a level:
(One 's a Bishop, one's gone to the Bench,
And one 's gone — well, to the Devil.)

"When, lo, a scratching and tapping!
In hobbled a ghastly visitor.
Listen to just what he told us himself
— No need of our playing inquisitor!"

Do you happen to know in Ross-shire
Mount . . . Ben . . . but the name scarce matters:
Of the naked fact I am sure enough,
Though I clothe it in rags and tatters.

You may recognize Ben by description;
  Behind him — a moor's immenseness:
Up goes the middle mount of a range,
  Fringed with its firs in denseness.

Rimming the edge, its fir-fringe, mind!
  For an edge there is, though narrow;
From end to end of the range, a stripe
  Of path runs straight as an arrow.

And the mountaineer who takes that path
  Saves himself miles of journey
He has to plod if he crosses the moor
  Through heather, peat and burnie.

But a mountaineer he needs must be,
  For, look you, right in the middle
Projects bluff Ben — with an end in *ich* —
  Why planted there, is a riddle:

Since all Ben's brothers little and big
  Keep rank, set shoulder to shoulder,
And only this burliest out must bulge
  Till it seems — to the beholder

From down in the gully, — as if Ben's breast
  To a sudden spike diminished,
Would signify to the boldest foot
  "All further passage finished!"

Yet the mountaineer who sidles on
  And on to the very bending,
Discovers, if heart and brain be proof,
  No necessary ending.

Foot up, foot down, to the turn abrupt
  Having trod, he, there arriving,
Finds — what he took for a point was breadth,
  A mercy of Nature's contriving.

So, he rounds what, when 't is reached, proves straight,
  From one side gains the other:
The wee path widens — resume the march,
  And he foils you, Ben my brother!

But Donald — (that name, I hope, will do) —
  I wrong him if I call "foiling"
The tramp of the callant, whistling the while
  As blithe as our kettle's boiling.

He had dared the danger from boyhood up,
  And now, — when perchance was waiting
A lass at the brig below, — 'twixt mount
  And moor would he stand debating?

Moreover this Donald was twenty-five,
  A glory of bone and muscle:
Did a fiend dispute the right of way,
  Donald would try a tussle.

Lightsomely marched he out of the broad
  On to the narrow and narrow;
A step more, rounding the angular rock,
  Reached the front straight as an arrow.

He stepped it, safe on the ledge he stood,
  When — whom found he full-facing?
What fellow in courage and wariness too,
  Had scouted ignoble pacing,

And left low safety to timid mates,
  And made for the dread dear danger,
And gained the height where — who could guess
  He would meet with a rival ranger?

'T was a gold-red stag that stood and stared,
  Gigantic and magnific,
By the wonder — ay, and the peril — struck
  Intelligent and pacific:

For a red deer is no fallow deer
  Grown cowardly through park-feeding;
He batters you like a thunderbolt
  If you brave his haunts unheeding.

I doubt he could hardly perform *volte-face*
  Had valor advised discretion:
You may walk on a rope, but to turn on a rope
  No Blondin makes profession.

Yet Donald must turn, would pride permit,
  Though pride ill brooks retiring:
Each eyed each — mute man, motionless beast —
  Less fearing than admiring.

These are the moments when quite new sense,
  To meet some need as novel,
Springs up in the brain: it inspired resource:
  — "Nor advance nor retreat but — grovel!"

And slowly, surely, never a whit
  Relaxing the steady tension
Of eye-stare which binds man to beast, —
  By an inch and inch declension,

Sank Donald sidewise down and down :
  Till flat, breast upwards, lying
At his six-foot length, no corpse more still,
  — " If he cross me ! The trick 's worth trying."

Minutes were an eternity ;
  But a new sense was created
In the stag's brain too ; he resolves ! Slow, sure.
  With eye-stare unabated,

Feelingly he extends a foot
  Which tastes the way ere it touches
Earth's solid and just escapes man's soft,
  Nor hold of the same unclutches

Till its fellow foot, light as a feather whisk,
  Lands itself no less finely :
So a mother removes a fly from the face
  Of her babe asleep supinely.

And now 't is the haunch and hind foot's turn
  — That 's hard : can the beast quite raise it ?
Yes, traversing half the prostrate length,
  His hoof-tip does not graze it.

Just one more lift ! But Donald, you see,
  Was sportsman first, man after :
A fancy lightened his caution through,
  — He well-nigh broke into laughter.

" It were nothing short of a miracle !
  Unrivalled, unexampled —
All sporting feats with this feat matched
  Were down and dead and trampled ! "

The last of the legs as tenderly
Follows the rest: or never
Or now is the time! His knife in reach,
And his right-hand loose — how clever!

For this can stab up the stomach's soft,
While the left-hand grasps the pastern.
A rise on the elbow, and — now 's the time
Or never: this turn 's the last turn!

I shall dare to place myself by God
Who scanned — for He does — each feature
Of the face thrown up in appeal to Him
By the agonizing creature.

Nay, I hear plain words: "Thy gift brings this!"
Up he sprang, back he staggered,
Over he fell, and with him our friend
— At following game no laggard.

Yet he was not dead when they picked next day
From the gully's depth the wreck of him;
His fall had been stayed by the stag beneath
Who cushioned and saved the neck of him.

But the rest of his body — why, doctors said,
Whatever could break was broken;
Legs, arms, ribs, all of him looked like a toast
In a tumbler of port-wine soaken.

"That your life is left you, thank the stag!"
Said they when — the slow cure ended —
They opened the hospital door, and thence
— Strapped, spliced, main fractures mended.

And minor damage left wisely alone, —
Like an old shoe clouted and cobbled,
Out — what went in a Goliath well-nigh, —
Some half of a David hobbled.

"You must ask an alms from house to house:
Sell the stag's head for a bracket,
With its grand twelve tines — I 'd buy it myself —
And use the skin for a jacket!"

He was wiser, made both head and hide
His win-penny: hands and knees on,
Would manage to crawl — poor crab — by the roads
In the misty stalking-season.

And if he discovered a bothy like this,
Why, harvest was sure: folk listened.
He told his tale to the lovers of Sport:
Lips twitched, cheeks glowed, eyes glistened.

And when he had come to the close, and spread
His spoils for the gazers' wonder,
With "Gentlemen, here 's the skull of the stag
I was over, thank God, not under!" —

The company broke out in applause;
"By Jingo, a lucky cripple!
Have a munch of grouse and a hunk of bread,
And a tug, besides, at our tipple!"

And "There 's my pay for your pluck!" cried This,
"And mine for your jolly story!"
Cried That, while T' other — but he was drunk —
Hiccupped "A trump, a Tory!"

I hope I gave twice as much as the rest;
For, as Homer would say, "within gate
Though teeth kept tongue," my whole soul growled
"Rightly rewarded, — Ingrate!"

SOLOMON AND BALKIS.

Solomon King of the Jews and the Queen of Sheba Balkis
Talk on the ivory throne, and we well may conjecture their talk is
Solely of things sublime: why else has she sought Mount Zion,
Climbed the six golden steps, and sat betwixt lion and lion?

She proves him with hard questions: before she has reached the middle
He smiling supplies the end, straight solves them riddle by riddle;
Until, dead-beaten at last, there is left no spirit in her,
And thus would she close the game whereof she was first beginner:

"O wisest thou of the wise, world's marvel and well-nigh monster,
One crabbed question more to construe or *vulgo* conster!
Who are those, of all mankind, a monarch of perfect wisdom
Should open to, when they knock at *spheteron do* — that's his dome?"

The King makes tart reply: "Whom else but the wise his equals
Should he welcome with heart and voice? — since, king though he be, such weak walls
Of circumstance — power and pomp — divide souls each from other
That whoso proves kingly in craft I needs must acknowledge my brother.

"Come poet, come painter, come sculptor, come builder — whate'er his condition,
Is he prime in his art? We are peers! My insight has pierced the partition
And hails — for the poem, the picture, the statue, the building — my fellow!
Gold's gold though dim in the dust: court-polish soon turns it yellow.

"But tell me in turn, O thou to thy weakling sex superior,
That for knowledge has travelled so far yet seemest no whit the wearier, —
Who are those, of all mankind, a queen like thyself, consummate
In wisdom, should call to her side with an affable 'Up hither, come, mate!'"

"The Good are my mates — how else? Why doubt it?" the Queen upbridled:
"Sure even above the Wise, — or in travel my eyes have idled, —
I see the Good stand plain: be they rich, poor, shrewd or simple,
If Good they only are. . . . Permit me to drop my wimple!"

And in that bashful jerk of her body, she — peace, thou scoffer! —
Jostled the King's right-hand stretched courteously help to proffer,
And so disclosed a portent: all unaware the Prince eyed
The Ring which bore the Name — turned outside now from inside!

The truth-compelling Name! — and at once "I greet the Wise — Oh,
Certainly welcome such to my court — with this proviso:
The building must be my temple, my person stand forth the statue,
The picture my portrait prove, and the poem my praise — you cat, you!"

But Solomon nonplussed? Nay! "Be truthful in turn!" so bade he:
"See the Name, obey its hest!" And at once subjoins the lady
— "Provided the Good are the young, men strong and tall and proper,
Such servants I straightway enlist, — which means . . ." but the blushes stop her.

"Ah, Soul," the Monarch sighed, "that wouldst soar yet ever crawlest,
How comes it thou canst discern the greatest yet choose the smallest,
Unless because heaven is far, where wings find fit expansion,
While creeping on all-fours suits, suffices the earthly mansion?

"Aspire to the Best! But which? There are Bests and Bests so many,
With a *habitat* each for each, earth's Best as much Best as any!
On Lebanon roots the cedar — soil lofty, yet stony and sandy —
While hyssop, of worth in its way, on the wall grows low but handy.

"Above may the Soul spread wing, spurn body and sense beneath her;
Below she must condescend to plodding unbuoyed by æther.
In heaven I yearn for knowledge, account all else inanity;
On earth I confess an itch for the praise of fools — that 's Vanity.

"It is naught, it will go, it can never presume above to trouble me;
But here, — why, it toys and tickles and teases, howe'er I redouble me
In a doggedest of endeavors to play the indifferent. Therefore,
Suppose we resume discourse? Thou hast travelled thus far: but wherefore?

"Solely for Solomon's sake, to see whom earth styles Sagest?"
Through her blushes laughed the Queen. "For the sake of a Sage? The gay jest!
On high, be communion with Mind — there, Body concerns not Balkis:
Down here, — do I make too bold? Sage Solomon — one fool's small kiss!"

CRISTINA AND MONALDESCHI.

Ah, but how each loved each, Marquis!
Here's the gallery they trod
Both together, he her god,
She his idol, — lend your rod,
Chamberlain! — ay, there they are — "*Quis*
Separabit?" — plain those two
Touching words come into view,
Apposite for me and you:

Since they witness to incessant
Love like ours: King Francis, he —
Diane the adored one, she —
Prototypes of you and me.
Everywhere is carved her Crescent
With his Salamander-sign —
Flame-fed creature: flame benign
To itself or, if malign,

Only to the meddling curious,
— So, be warned, Sir! Where's my head?
How it wanders! What I said
Merely meant — the creature, fed
Thus on flame, was scarce injurious
Save to fools who woke its ire,
Thinking fit to play with fire.
'T is the Crescent you admire?

Then, be Diane! I 'll be Francis.
Crescents change, — true! — wax and wane.
Woman-like: male hearts retain
Heat nor, once warm, cool again.

So, we figure — such our chance is —
I as man and you as . . . What?
Take offence? My Love forgot
He plays woman, I do not?

I — the woman? See my habit,
Ask my people! Anyhow,
Be we what we may, one vow
Binds us, male or female. Now, —
Stand, Sir! Read! "*Quis separabit?*"
Half a mile of pictured way
Past these palace-walls to-day
Traversed, this I came to say.

You must needs begin to love me;
First I hated, then, at best,
— Have it so! — I acquiesced;
Pure compassion did the rest.
From below thus raised above me,
Would you, step by step, descend,
Pity me, become my friend,
Like me, like less, loathe at end?

That 's the ladder's round you rose by!
That — my own foot kicked away,
Having raised you: let it stay,
Serve you for retreating? Nay.
Close to me you climbed: as close by,
Keep your station, though the peak
Reached proves somewhat bare and bleak!
Woman 's strong if man is weak.

Keep here, loving me forever!
Love's look, gesture, speech, I claim;
Act love, lie love, all the same —
Play as earnest were our game!

Lonely I stood long: 't was clever
When you climbed, before men's eyes,
Spurned the earth and scaled the skies,
Gained my peak and grasped your prize.

Here you stood, then, to men's wonder;
Here you tire of standing? Kneel!
Cure what giddiness you feel,
This way! Do your senses reel?
Not unlikely! What rolls under?
Yawning death in yon abyss
Where the waters whirl and hiss
Round more frightful peaks than this.

Should my buffet dash you thither . . .
But be sage! No watery grave
Needs await you: seeming brave
Kneel on safe, dear timid slave!
You surmised, when you climbed hither,
Just as easy were retreat
Should you tire, conceive unmeet
Longer patience at my feet?

Me as standing, you as stooping, —
Who arranged for each the pose?
Lest men think us friends turned foes,
Keep the attitude you chose!
Men are used to this same grouping —
I and you like statues seen.
You and I, no third between,
Kneel and stand! That makes the scene.

Mar it — and one buffet . . . Pardon!
Needless warmth — wise words in waste!
'T was prostration that replaced
Kneeling, then? A proof of taste.

Crouch, not kneel, while I mount guard on
Prostrate love — become no waif,
No estray to waves that chafe
Disappointed — love 's so safe!

Waves that chafe? The idlest fancy!
Peaks that scare? I think we know
Walls enclose our sculpture: so
Grouped, we pose in Fontainebleau.
Up now! Wherefore hesitancy?
Arm in arm and cheek by cheek,
Laugh with me at waves and peak!
Silent still? Why, pictures speak.

See, where Juno strikes Ixion,
Primatice speaks plainly! Pooh —
Rather, Florentine Le Roux!
I've lost head for who is who —
So it swims and wanders! Fie on
What still proves me female! Here,
By the staircase! — for we near
That dark "Gallery of the Deer."

Look me in the eyes once! Steady!
Are you faithful now as erst
On that eve when we two first
Vowed at Avon, blessed and cursed
Faith and falsehood? Pale already?
Forward! Must my hand compel
Entrance — this way? Exit — well,
Somehow, somewhere. Who can tell?

What if to the self-same place in
Rustic Avon, at the door
Of the village church once more,
Where a tombstone paves the floor

By that holy-water basin
You appealed to — "As, below,
This stone hides its corpse, e'en so
I your secrets hide"? What ho!

Friends, my four! You, Priest, confess him!
I have judged the culprit there:
Execute my sentence! Care
For no mail such cowards wear!
Done, Priest? Then, absolve and bless him!
Now — you three, stab thick and fast,
Deep and deeper! Dead at last?
Thanks, friends — Father, thanks! Aghast?

What one word of his confession
Would you tell me, though I lured
With that royal crown abjured
Just because its bars immured
Love too much? Love burst compression,
Fled free, finally confessed
All its secrets to that breast
Whence . . . let Avon tell the rest!

MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT AND FUSELI.

Oh but is it not hard, Dear?
Mine are the nerves to quake at a mouse:
If a spider drops I shrink with fear:
I should die outright in a haunted house;
While for you — did the danger dared bring help —
From a lion's den I could steal his whelp,

With a serpent round me, stand stock-still,
Go sleep in a churchyard, — so would will
Give me the power to dare and do
Valiantly — just for you!

Much amiss in the head, Dear,
I toil at a language, tax my brain
Attempting to draw — the scratches here!
I play, play, practise and all in vain:
But for you — if my triumph brought you pride,
I would grapple with Greek Plays till I died,
Paint a portrait of you — who can tell?
Work my fingers off for your "Pretty well:"
Language and painting and music too,
Easily done — for you!

Strong and fierce in the heart, Dear,
With — more than a will — what seems a power
To pounce on my prey, love outbroke here
In flame devouring and to devour.
Such love has labored its best and worst
To win me a lover; yet, last as first,
I have not quickened his pulse one beat,
Fixed a moment's fancy, bitter or sweet:
Yet the strong fierce heart's love's labor's due,
Utterly lost, was — you!

ADAM, LILITH, AND EVE.

One day it thundered and lightened.
Two women, fairly frightened,
Sank to their knees, transformed, transfixed,
At the feet of the man who sat betwixt;
And "Mercy!" cried each — "if I tell the truth
Of a passage in my youth!"

Said This: "Do you mind the morning
I met your love with scorning?
As the worst of the venom left my lips,
I thought 'If, despite this lie, he strips
The mask from my soul with a kiss — I crawl
His slave, — soul, body and all!'"

Said That: "We stood to be married;
The priest, or some one, tarried;
'If Paradise-door prove locked?' smiled you.
I thought, as I nodded, smiling too,
'Did one, that's away, arrive — nor late
Nor soon should unlock Hell's gate!'"

It ceased to lighten and thunder.
Up started both in wonder,
Looked round and saw that the sky was clear,
Then laughed "Confess you believed us, Dear!"
"I saw through the joke!" the man replied
They re-seated themselves beside.

IXION.

HIGH in the dome, suspended, of Hell, sad triumph, behold us!
Here the revenge of a God, there the amends of a Man.
Whirling forever in torment, flesh once mortal, immortal
Made — for a purpose of hate — able to die and revive,
Pays to the uttermost pang, then, newly for payment replenished,
Doles out — old yet young — agonies ever afresh;
Whence the result above me: torment is bridged by a rainbow, —
Tears, sweat, blood, — each spasm, ghastly once, glorified now.
Wrung, by the rush of the wheel ordained my place of reposing,
Off in a sparklike spray, — flesh become vapor thro' pain, —
Flies the bestowment of Zeus, soul's vaunted bodily vesture,
Made that his feats observed gain the approval of Man, —
Flesh that he fashioned with sense of the earth and the sky and the ocean,
Framed should pierce to the star, fitted to pore on the plant, —
All, for a purpose of hate, re-framed, re-fashioned, re-fitted
Till, consummate at length, — lo, the employment of sense!
Pain's mere minister now to the soul, once pledged to her pleasure —

Soul, if untrammelled by flesh, unapprehensive of pain!
Body, professed soul's slave, which serving beguiled and betrayed her,
Made things false seem true, cheated thro' eye and thro' ear,
Lured thus heart and brain to believe in the lying reported, —
Spurn but the traitorous slave, uttermost atom, away,
What should obstruct soul's rush on the real, the only apparent?
Say I have erred, — how else? Was I Ixion or Zeus?
Foiled by my senses I dreamed; I doubtless awaken in wonder:
This proves shine, that — shade? Good was the evil that seemed?
Shall I, with sight thus gained, by torture be taught I was blind once?
Sisuphos, teaches thy stone — Tantalos, teaches thy thirst
Aught which unaided sense, purged pure, less plainly demonstrates?
No, for the past was dream: now that the dreamers awake,
Sisuphos scouts low fraud, and to Tantalos treason is folly.
Ask of myself, whose form melts on the murderous wheel,
What is the sin which throe and throe prove sin to the sinner!
Say the false charge was true, — thus do I expiate, say,
Arrogant thought, word, deed, — mere man who conceited me godlike,
Sat beside Zeus, my friend — knelt before Heré, my love!

What were the need but of pitying power to touch and disperse it,
Film-work — eye's and ear's — all the distraction of sense?
How should the soul not see, not hear, — perceive and as plainly
Render, in thought, word, deed, back again truth — not a lie?
"Ay, but the pain is to punish thee!" Zeus, once more for a pastime,
Play the familiar, the frank! Speak and have speech in return!
I was of Thessaly king, there ruled and a people obeyed me:
Mine to establish the law, theirs to obey it or die:
Wherefore? Because of the good to the people, because of the honor
Thence accruing to me, king, the king's law was supreme.
What of the weakling, the ignorant criminal? Not who, excuseless,
Breaking my law braved death, knowing his deed and its due —
Nay, but the feeble and foolish, the poor transgressor, of purpose
No whit more than a tree, born to erectness of bole,
Palm or plane or pine, we laud if lofty, columnar —
Loathe if athwart, askew, — leave to the axe and the flame!
Where is the vision may penetrate earth and beholding acknowledge
Just one pebble at root ruined the straightness of stem?
Whose fine vigilance follows the sapling, accounts for the failure,

— Here blew wind, so it bent: there the snow lodged, so it broke?
Also the tooth of the beast, bird's bill, mere bite of the insect
Gnawed, gnarled, warped their worst: passive it lay to offence.
King — I was man, no more: what I recognized faulty I punished,
Laying it prone: be sure, more than a man had I proved,
Watch and ward o'er the sapling at birth-time had saved it, nor simply
Owned the distortion's excuse, — hindered it wholly: nay, more —
Even a man, as I sat in my place to do judgment, and pallid
Criminals passing to doom shuddered away at my foot,
Could I have probed thro' the face to the heart, read plain a repentance,
Crime confessed fools' play, virtue ascribed to the wise,
Had I not stayed the consignment to doom, not dealt the renewed ones
Life to retraverse the past, light to retrieve the misdeed?
Thus had I done, and thus to have done much more it behoves thee,
Zeus who madest man — flawless or faulty, thy work!
What if the charge were true, as thou mouthest, — Ixion the cherished
Minion of Zeus grew vain, vied with the godships and fell,

Forfeit thro' arrogance? Stranger! I clothed, with the grace of our human,
Inhumanity — gods, natures I likened to ours.
Man among men I had borne me till gods forsooth must regard me
— Nay, must approve, applaud, claim as a comrade at last.
Summoned to enter their circle, I sat — their equal, how other?
Love should be absolute love, faith is in fulness or naught.
"I am thy friend, be mine!" smiled Zeus: "If Heré attract thee,"
Blushed the imperial cheek, "then — as thy heart may suggest!"
Faith in me sprang to the faith, my love hailed love as its fellow,
"Zeus, we are friends — how fast! Heré, my heart for thy heart!"
Then broke smile into fury of frown, and the thunder of "Hence, fool!"
Then thro' the kiss laughed scorn "Limbs or a cloud was to clasp?"
Then from Olumpos to Erebos, then from the rapture to torment,
Then from the fellow of gods — misery's mate, to the man!
— Man henceforth and forever, who lent from the glow of his nature
Warmth to the cold, with light colored the black and the blank.
So did a man conceive of your passion, you passion-protesters!
So did he trust, so love — being the truth of your lie!

You to aspire to be Man! Man made you who vainly would ape him:
You are the hollowness, he — filling you, falsifies void.
Even as — witness the emblem, Hell's sad triumph suspended,
Born of my tears, sweat, blood — bursting to vapor above —
Arching my torment, an iris ghostlike startles the darkness,
Cold white — jewelry quenched — justifies, glorifies pain.
Strive, mankind, though strife endure through endless obstruction,
Stage after stage, each rise marred by as certain a fall!
Baffled forever — yet never so baffled but, e'en in the baffling,
When Man's strength proves weak, checked in the body or soul —
Whatsoever the medium, flesh or essence, — Ixion's
Made for a purpose of hate, — clothing the entity Thou,
— Medium whence that entity strives for the Not-Thou beyond it,
Fire elemental, free, frame unencumbered, the All, —
Never so baffled but — when, on the verge of an alien existence,
Heartened to press, by pangs burst to the infinite Pure,
Nothing is reached but the ancient weakness still that arrests strength,
Circumambient still, still the poor human array,
Pride and revenge and hate and cruelty — all it has burst through,

Thought to escape, — fresh formed, found in the fashion it fled, —
Never so baffled but — when Man pays the price of endeavor,
Thunderstruck, downthrust, Tartaros-doomed to the wheel, —
Then, ay, then, from the tears and sweat and blood of his torment,
E'en from the triumph of Hell, up let him look and rejoice!
What is the influence, high o'er Hell, that turns to a rapture
Pain — and despair's murk mists blends in a rainbow of hope?
What is beyond the obstruction, stage by stage tho' it baffle?
Back must I fall, confess "Ever the weakness I fled"?
No, for beyond, far, far is a Purity all-unobstructed!
Zeus was Zeus — not Man: wrecked by his weakness, I whirl.
Out of the wreck I rise — past Zeus to the Potency o'er him!
I — to have hailed him my friend! I — to have clasped her — my love!
Pallid birth of my pain, — where light, where light is, aspiring
Thither I rise, whilst thou — Zeus, keep the godship and sink!

JOCHANAN HAKKADOSH.

"THIS now, this other story makes amends
And justifies our Mishna," quoth the Jew
Aforesaid. "Tell it, learnedest of friends!"

A certain morn broke beautiful and blue
O'er Schiphaz city, bringing joy and mirth,
— So had ye deemed; while the reverse was true,

Since one small house there gave a sorrow birth
In such black sort that, to each faithful eye,
Midnight, not morning settled on the earth.

How else, when it grew certain thou wouldst die
Our much-enlightened master, Israel's prop,
Eximious Jochanan Ben Sabbathai?

Old, yea but, undiminished of a drop,
The vital essence pulsed through heart and brain;
Time left unsickled yet the plenteous crop

On poll and chin and cheek, whereof a skein
Handmaids might weave — hairs silk-soft, silver-white,
Such as the wool-plant's; none the less in vain

Had Physic striven her best against the spite
Of fell disease: the Rabbi must succumb;
And, round the couch whereon in piteous plight

He lay a-dying, scholars, — awe-struck, dumb
Throughout the night-watch, — roused themselves and spoke
One to the other: "Ere death's touch benumb

"His active sense, — while yet 'neath Reason's yoke
Obedient toils his tongue, — befits we claim
The fruit of long experience, bid this oak

"Shed us an acorn which may, all the same,
Grow to a temple-pillar, — dear that day! —
When Israel's scattered seed finds place and name

"Among the envious nations. Lamp us, pray,
Thou the Enlightener! Partest hence in peace?
Hailest without regret — much less, dismay —

"The hour of thine approximate release
From fleshly bondage soul hath found obstruct?
Calmly envisagest the sure increase

"Of knowledge? Eden's tree must hold unplucked
Some apple, sure, has never tried thy tooth,
Juicy with sapience thou hast sought, not sucked?

"Say, does age acquiesce in vanished youth?
Still towers thy purity above — as erst —
Our pleasant follies? Be thy last word — truth!"

The Rabbi groaned; then, grimly, "Last as first
The truth speak I — in boyhood who began
Striving to live an angel, and, amerced

"For such presumption, die now hardly man.
What have I proved of life? To live, indeed,
That much I learned: but here lies Jochanan

"More luckless than stood David when, to speed
His fighting with the Philistine, they brought
Saul's harness forth: whereat, 'Alack, I need

" ' Armor to arm me, but have never fought
With sword and spear, nor tried to manage shield,
Proving arms' use, as well-trained warrior ought.

" ' Only a sling and pebbles can I wield!'
So he: while I, contrariwise, 'No trick
Of weapon helpful on the battle-field

" ' Comes unfamiliar to my theoric:
But, bid me put in practice what I know,
Give me a sword — it stings like Moses' stick,

" ' A serpent I let drop apace.' E'en so,
I, — able to comport me at each stage
Of human life as never here below

" Man played his part, — since mine the heritage
Of wisdom carried to that perfect pitch,
Ye rightly praise, — I, therefore, who, thus sage,

" Could sure act man triumphantly, enrich
Life's annals with example how I played
Lover, Bard, Soldier, Statist, — (all of which

" Parts in presentment failing, cries invade
The world's ear — ' Ah, the Past, the pearl-gift thrown
To hogs, time's opportunity we made

" ' So light of, only recognized when flown!
Had we been wise!') — in fine, I — wise enough, —
What profit brings me wisdom never shown

" Just when its showing would from each rebuff
Shelter weak virtue, threaten back to bounds
Encroaching vice, tread smooth each track too rough

" For youth's unsteady footstep, climb the rounds
Of life's long ladder, one by slippery one,
Yet make no stumble? Me hard fate confounds

" With that same crowd of wailers I outrun
By promising to teach another cry
Of more hilarious mood than theirs, the sun

" I look my last at is insulted by.
What cry, — ye ask? Give ear on every side!
Witness yon Lover! 'How entrapped am I!

" " 'Methought, because a virgin's rose-lip vied
With ripe Khubbezleh's, needs must beauty mate
With meekness and discretion in a bride:

" " 'Bride she became to me who wail — too late —
Unwise I loved!' That 's one cry. 'Mind 's my gift:
I might have loaded me with lore, full weight

" " 'Pressed down and running over at each rift
O' the brain-bag where the famished clung and fed.
I filled it with what rubbish! — would not sift

" " 'The wheat from chaff, sound grain from musty — shed
Poison abroad as oft as nutriment —
And sighing say but as my fellows said,

" " " *Unwise I learned!*' That 's two. 'In dwarf's-play spent
Was giant's prowess: warrior all unversed
In war's right waging, I struck brand, was lent

" " 'For steel's fit service, on mere stone — and cursed
Alike the shocked limb and the shivered steel,
Seeing too late the blade's true use which erst

" ' How was I blind to ! My cry swells the peal —
Unwise I fought !' That's three. But wherefore waste
Breath on the wailings longer ? Why reveal

" A root of bitterness whereof the taste
Is noisome to Humanity at large ?
First we get Power, but Power absurdly placed

" In Folly's keeping, who resigns her charge
To Wisdom when all Power grows nothing worth :
Bones marrowless are mocked with helm and targe

" When, like your Master's, soon below the earth
With worms shall warfare only be. Farewell,
Children ! I die a failure since my birth ! "

" Not so ! " arose a protest as, pell-mell,
They pattered from his chamber to the street,
Bent on a last resource. Our Targums tell

That such resource there is. Put case, there meet
The Nine Points of Perfection — rarest chance —
Within some saintly teacher whom the fleet

Years, in their blind implacable advance,
O'ertake before fit teaching born of these
Have magnified his scholars' countenance, —

If haply folk compassionating please
To render up — according to his store,
Each one — a portion of the life he sees

Hardly worth saving when 't is set before
Earth's benefit should the Saint, Hakkadosh,
Favored thereby, attain to full fourscore —

If such contribute (Scoffer, spare thy "Bosh!")
A year, a month, a day, an hour — to eke
Life out, — in him away the gift shall wash

That much of ill-spent time recorded, streak
The twilight of the so-assisted sage
With a new sunrise: truth, though strange to speak!

Quick to the doorway, then, where youth and age,
All Israel, thronging, waited for the last
News of the loved one. "'T is the final stage:

"Art's utmost done, the Rabbi's feet tread fast
The way of all flesh!" So announced that apt
Olive-branch Tsaddik: "Yet, O Brethren, cast

"No eye to earthward! Look where heaven has clapped
Morning's extinguisher — yon ray-shot robe
Of sun-threads — on the constellation mapped

"And mentioned by our Elders, — yea, from Job
Down to Satam, — as figuring forth — what?
Perpend a mystery! Ye call it *Dob* —

"'The Bear': I trow, a wiser name than that
Were *Aisch* — 'The Bier': a corpse those four stars hold,
Which — are not those Three Daughters weeping at,

"*Banoth?* I judge so: list while I unfold
The reason. As in twice twelve hours this Bier
Goes and returns, about the East-cone rolled,

"So may a setting luminary here
Be rescued from extinction, rolled anew
Upon its track of labor, strong and clear,

"About the Pole — that Salem, every Jew
Helps to build up when thus he saves some Saint
Ordained its architect. Ye grasp the clue

"To all ye seek? The Rabbi's lamp-flame faint
Sinks: would ye raise it? Lend then life from yours,
Spare each his oil-drop! Do I need acquaint

"The Chosen how self-sacrifice ensures
Ten-fold requital? — urge ye emulate
The fame of those Old Just Ones death procures

"Such praise for, that 't is now men's sole debate
Which of the Ten, who volunteered at Rome
To die for glory to our Race, was great

"Beyond his fellows? Was it thou — the comb
Of iron carded, flesh from bone, away,
While thy lips sputtered thro' their bloody foam

"Without a stoppage (O brave Akiba!)
'Hear, Israel, our Lord God is One'? Or thou,
Jischab? — who smiledst, burning, since there lay,

"Burning along with thee, our Law! I trow,
Such martyrdom might tax flesh to afford:
While that for which I make petition now,

"To what amounts it? Youngster, wilt thou hoard
Each minute of long years thou look'st to spend
In dalliance with thy spouse? Hast thou so soared,

"Singer of songs, all out of sight of friend
And teacher, warbling like a woodland bird,
There's left no Selah, 'twixt two psalms, to lend

"Our late-so-tuneful quirist? Thou, averred
The fighter born to plant our lion-flag
Once more on Zion's mount, — doth, all-unheard,

"My pleading fail to move thee? Toss some rag
Shall stanch our wound, some minute never missed
From swordsman's lustihood like thine! Wilt lag

"In liberal bestowment, show close fist
When open palm we look for, — thou, wide-known
For statecraft? whom, 't is said, an if thou list,

"The Shah himself would seat beside his throne,
So valued were advice from thee" . . . But here
He stopped short: such a hubbub! Not alone

From those addressed, but, far as well as near,
The crowd broke into clamor: "Mine, mine, mine —
Lop from my life the excrescence, never fear!

"At me thou lookedst, markedst me! Assign
To me that privilege of granting life —
Mine, mine!" Then he: "Be patient! I combine

"The needful portions only, wage no strife
With Nature's law nor seek to lengthen out
The Rabbi's day unduly. 'T is the knife

"I stop, — would cut its thread too short. About
As much as helps life last the proper term,
The appointed Fourscore, — that I crave and scout

"A too-prolonged existence. Let the worm
Change at fit season to the butterfly!
And here a story strikes me, to confirm

" This judgment. Of our worthies, none ranks high
As Perida who kept the famous school:
None rivalled him in patience: none! For why?

" In lecturing it was his constant rule,
Whatever he expounded, to repeat
— Ay, and keep on repeating, lest some fool

" Should fail to understand him fully — (feat
Unparalleled, Uzzean!) — do ye mark? —
Five hundred times! So might he entrance beat

" For knowledge into howsoever dark
And dense the brain-pan. Yet it happed, at close
Of one especial lecture, not one spark

" Of light was found to have illumed the rows
Of pupils round their pedagogue. ' What, still
Impenetrable to me? Then — here goes!'

" And for a second time he sets the rill
Of knowledge running, and five hundred times
More re-repeats the matter — and gains *nil.*

" Out broke a voice from heaven: ' Thy patience climbs
Even thus high. Choose! Wilt thou, rather, quick
Ascend to bliss — or, since thy zeal sublimes

" ' Such drudgery, will thy back still bear its crick,
Bent o'er thy class, — thy voice drone spite of drouth, —
Five hundred years more at thy desk wilt stick?'

" ' To heaven with me!' was in the good man's mouth,
When all his scholars, — cruel-kind were they! —
Stopped utterance, from East, West, North and South,

"Rending the welkin with their shout of 'Nay —
No heaven as yet for our instructor! Grant
Five hundred years on earth for Perida!'

"And so long did he keep instructing! Want
Our Master no such misery! I but take
Three months of life marital. Ministrant

"Be thou of so much, Poet! Bold I make,
Swordsman, with thy frank offer! — and conclude,
Statist, with thine! One year, — ye will not shake

"My purpose to accept no more. So rude?
The very boys and girls, forsooth, must press
And proffer their addition? Thanks! The mood

"Is laudable, but I reject, no less,
One month, week, day of life more. Leave my gown,
Ye overbold ones! Your life's gift, you guess,

"Were good as any? Rudesby, get thee down!
Set my feet free, or fear my staff! Farewell,
Seniors and saviours, sharers of renown

"With Jochanan henceforward!" Straightway fell
Sleep on the sufferer; who awoke in health,
Hale everyway, so potent was the spell.

O the rare Spring-time! Who is he by stealth
Approaches Jochanan? — embowered that sits
Under his vine and figtree mid the wealth

Of garden-sights and sounds, since intermits
Never the turtle's coo, nor stays nor stints
The rose her smell. In homage that befits

The musing Master, Tsaddik, see, imprints
A kiss on the extended foot, low bends
Forehead to earth, then, all-obsequious, hints

"What if it should be time? A period ends —
That of the Lover's gift — his quarter-year
Of lustihood: 't is just thou make amends,

"Return that loan with usury: so, here
Come I, of thy Disciples delegate,
Claiming our lesson from thee. Make appear

"Thy profit from experience! Plainly state
How men should Love!" Thus he: and to him thus
The Rabbi: "Love, ye call it? — rather, Hate!

"What wouldst thou? Is it needful I discuss
Wherefore new sweet wine, poured in bottles caked
With old strong wine's deposit, offers us

"Spoilt liquor we recoil from, thirst-unslaked?
Like earth-smoke from a crevice, out there wound
Languors and yearnings: not a sense but ached

"Weighed on by fancied form and feature, sound
Of silver word and sight of sunny smile:
No beckoning of a flower-branch, no profound

"Purple of noon-oppression, no light wile
O' the West wind, but transformed itself till — brief —
Before me stood the phantasy ye style

"Youth's love, the joy that shall not come to grief,
Born to endure, eternal, unimpaired
By custom the accloyer, time the thief.

"Had Age's hard cold knowledge only spared
That ignorance of Youth! But now the dream,
Fresh as from Paradise, alighting fared

"As fares the pigeon, finding what may seem
Her nest's safe hollow holds a snake inside
Coiled to enclasp her. See, Eve stands supreme

"In youth and beauty! Take her for thy bride!
What Youth deemed crystal, Age finds out was dew
Morn set a-sparkle, but which noon quick dried

"While Youth bent gazing at its red and blue
Supposed perennial, — never dreamed the sun
Which kindled the display would quench it too.

"Graces of shape and color — every one
With its appointed period of decay
When ripe to purpose! 'Still, these dead and done,

"'Survives the woman-nature — the soft sway
Of undefinable omnipotence
O'er our strong male-stuff, we of Adam's clay.'

"Ay, if my physics taught not why and whence
The attraction! Am I like the simple steer
Who, from his pasture lured inside the fence

"Where yoke and goad await him, holds that mere
Kindliness prompts extension of the hand
Hollowed for barley, which drew near and near

"His nose — in proof that, of the horned band,
The farmer best affected him! Beside,
Steer, since his calfhood, got to understand

"Farmers a many in the world so wide
Were ready with a handful just as choice
Or choicer — maize and cummin, treats untried.

"Shall I wed wife, and all my days rejoice
I gained the peacock? 'Las me, round I look,
And lo—'With me thou wouldst have blamed no voice

"'Like hers that daily deafens like a rook:
I am the phœnix!' —'I, the lark, the dove,
— The owl,' for aught knows he who blindly took

"Peacock for partner, while the vale, the grove,
The plain held bird-mates in abundance. There!
Youth, try fresh capture! Age has found out Love

"Long ago. War seems better worth man's care.
But leave me! Disappointment finds a balm
Haply in slumber." "This first step o' the stair

"To knowledge fails me, but the victor's palm
Lies on the next to tempt him overleap
A stumbling-block. Experienced, gather calm,

"Thou excellence of Judah, cured by sleep
Which ushers in the Warrior, to replace
The Lover! At due season I shall reap

"Fruit of my planting!" So, with lengthened face,
Departed Tsaddik: and three moons more waxed
And waned, and not until the Summer-space

Waned likewise, any second visit taxed
The Rabbi's patience. But at three months' end,
Behold, supine beneath a rock, relaxed

The sage lay musing till the noon should spend
Its ardor. Up comes Tsaddik, who but he,
With "Master, may I warn thee, nor offend,

"That time comes round again? We look to see
Sprout from the old branch — not the youngling twig —
But fruit of sycamine: deliver me,

"To share among my fellows, some plump fig,
Juicy as seedy! That same man of war,
Who, with a scantling of his store, made big

"Thy starveling nature, caused thee, safe from scar,
To share his gains by long acquaintanceship
With bump and bruise and all the knocks that are

"Of battle dowry, — he bids loose thy lip,
Explain the good of battle! Since thou know'st
Let us know likewise! Fast the moments slip,

"More need that we improve them!" — "Ay, we boast,
We warriors in our youth, that with the sword
Man goes the swiftliest to the uttermost —

"Takes the straight way thro' lands yet unexplored
To absolute Right and Good, — may so obtain
God's glory and man's weal too long ignored,

"Too late attained by preachments all in vain —
The passive process. Knots get tangled worse
By toying with: does cut cord close again?

"Moreover there is blessing in the curse
Peace-praisers call war. What so sure evolves
All the capacities of soul, proves nurse

" Of that self-sacrifice in men which solves
The riddle — *Wherein differs Man from beast?*
Foxes boast cleverness and courage wolves:

" Nowhere but in mankind is found the least
Touch of an impulse ' To our fellows — good
I' the highest! — not diminished but increased

" ' By the condition plainly understood
— Such good shall be attained at price of hurt
I' the highest to ourselves! ' Fine sparks, that brood

" Confusedly in Man, 't is war bids spurt
Forth into flame: as fares the meteor-mass,
Whereof no particle but holds inert

" Some seed of light and heat, however crass
The enclosure, yet avails not to discharge
Its radiant birth before there come to pass

" Some push external, — strong to set at large
Those dormant fire-seeds, whirl them in a trice
Through heaven and light up earth from marge to marge:

" Since force by motion makes — what erst was ice —
Crash into fervency and so expire,
Because some Djinn has hit on a device

" For proving the full prettiness of fire!
Ay, thus we prattle — young: but old — why, first,
Where 's that same Right and Good — (the wise inquire) —

" So absolute, it warrants the outburst
Of blood, tears, all war's woful consequence,
That comes of the fine flaring? Which plague cursed

"The more your benefited Man — offence,
Or what suppressed the offender? Say it did —
Show us the evil cured by violence,

"Submission cures not also! Lift the lid
From the maturing crucible, we find
Its slow sure coaxing-out of virtue hid

"In that same meteor-mass, hath uncombined
Those particles and, yielding for result
Gold, not mere flame, by so much leaves behind

"The heroic product. E'en the simple cult
Of Edom's children wisely bids them turn
Cheek to the smiter with '*Sic Jesus vult.*'

"Say there 's a tyrant by whose death we earn
Freedom, and justify a war to wage:
Good! — were we only able to discern

"Exactly how to reach and catch and cage
Him only and no innocent beside!
Whereas the folk whereon war wreaks its rage

"— How shared they his ill-doing? Far and wide
The victims of our warfare strew the plain,
Ten thousand dead, whereof not one but died

"In faith that vassals owed their suzerain
Life: therefore each paid tribute, — honest soul, —
To that same Right and Good ourselves are fain

"To call exclusively our end. From bole
(Since ye accept in me a sycamine)
Pluck, eat, digest a fable — yea, the soie

"Fig I afford you! 'Dost thou dwarf my vine?'
(So did a certain husbandman address
The tree which faced his field), 'Receive condign

"'Punishment, prompt removal by the stress
Of axe I forthwith lay unto thy root!'
Long did he hack and hew, the root no less

"As long defied him, for its tough strings shoot
As deep down as the boughs above aspire:
All that he did was — shake to the tree's foot

"Leafage and fruitage, things we most require
For shadow and refreshment: which good deed
Thoroughly done, behold the axe-haft tires

"His hand, and he desisting leaves unfreed
The vine he hacked and hewed for. Comes a frost,
One natural night's work, and there 's little need

"Of hacking, hewing: lo, the tree 's a ghost!
Perished it starves, black death from topmost bough
To farthest-reaching fibre! Shall I boast

"My rough work, — warfare, — helped more? Loving, now —
That, by comparison, seems wiser, since
The loving fool was able to avow

"He could effect his purpose, just evince
Love's willingness, — once 'ware of what she lacked,
His loved one, — to go work for that, nor wince

"At self-expenditure: he neither hacked
Nor hewed, but when the lady of his field
Required defence because the sun attacked,

"He, failing to obtain a fitter shield,
Would interpose his body, and so blaze,
Blest in the burning. Ah, were mine to wield

"The intellectual weapon — poet-lays, —
How preferably had I sung one song
Which . . . but my sadness sinks me: go your ways!

"I sleep out disappointment." "Come along,
Never lose heart! There 's still as much again
Of our bestowment left to right the wrong

"Done by its earlier moiety — explain
Wherefore, who may! The Poet's mood comes next.
Was he not wishful the poetic vein

"Should pulse within him? Jochanan, thou reck'st
Little of what a generous flood shall soon
Float thy clogged spirit free and unperplexed

"Above dry dubitation! Song 's the boon
Shall make amends for my untoward mistake
That Joshua-like thou couldst bid sun and moon —

"Fighter and Lover, — which for most men make
All they descry in heaven, — stand both stock-still
And lend assistance. Poet shalt thou wake!"

Autumn brings Tsaddik. "Ay, there speeds the rill
Loaded with leaves: a scowling sky, beside:
The wind makes olive-trees up yonder hill

"Whiten and shudder — symptoms far and wide
Of gleaning-time's approach; and glean good store
May I presume to trust we shall, thou tried

"And ripe experimenter! Three months more
Have ministered to growth of Song: that graft
Into thy sterile stock has found at core

"Moisture, I warrant, hitherto unquaffed
By boughs, however florid, wanting sap
Of prose-experience which provides the draught

"Which song-sprouts, wanting, wither: vain we tap
A youngling stem all green and immature:
Experience must secrete the stuff, our hap

"Will be to quench Man's thirst with, glad and sure
That fancy wells up through corrective fact:
Missing which test of truth, though flowers allure

"The goodman's eye with promise, soon the pact
Is broken, and 't is flowers, — mere words, — he finds
When things, — that 's fruit, — he looked for. Well, once cracked

"The nut, how glad my tooth the kernel grinds!
Song may henceforth boast substance! Therefore, hail
Proser and poet, perfect in both kinds!

"Thou from whose eye hath dropped the envious scale
Which hides the truth of things and substitutes
Deceptive show, unaided optics fail

"To transpierce, — hast entrusted to the lute's
Soft but sure guardianship some unrevealed
Secret shall lift mankind above the brutes

"As only knowledge can?" "A fount unsealed"
(Sighed Jochanan) "should seek the heaven in leaps
To die in dew-gems — not find death, congealed

"By contact with the cavern's nether deeps,
Earth's secretest foundation where, enswathed
In dark and fear, primæval mystery sleeps —

"Petrific fount wherein my fancies bathed
And straight turned ice. My dreams of good and fair
In soaring upwards had dissolved, unscathed

"By any influence of the kindly air,
Singing, as each took flight, The Future — that's
Our destination, mists turn rainbows there,

"Which sink to fog, confounded in the flats
O' the Present! Day's the song-time for the lark,
Night for her music boasts but owls and bats.

"And what's the Past but night — the deep and dark
Ice-spring I speak of, corpse-thicked with its drowned
Dead fancies which no sooner touched the mark

"They aimed at — fact — than all at once they found
Their film-wings freeze, henceforth unfit to reach
And roll in æther, revel — robed and crowned

"As truths, confirmed by falsehood all and each —
Sovereign and absolute and ultimate!
Up with them, skyward, Youth, ere Age impeach

"Thy least of promises to re-instate
Adam in Eden! Sing on, ever sing,
Chirp till thou burst! — the fool cicada's fate,

"Who holds that after Summer next comes Spring,
Than Summer's self sun-warmed, spice-scented more
Fighting was better! There, no fancy-fling

" Pitches you past the point was reached of yore
By Samsons, Abners, Joabs, Judases,
The mighty men of valor who, before

" Our little day, did wonders none profess
To doubt were fable and not fact, so trust
By fancy-flights to emulate much less.

" Were I a Statesman, now ! Why, that were just
To pinnacle my soul, mankind above,
A-top the universe : no vulgar lust

" To gratify — fame, greed, at this remove
Looked down upon so far — or overlooked
So largely, rather — that mine eye should rove

" World-wide and rummage earth, the many-nooked,
Yet find no unit of the human flock
Caught straying but straight comes back hooked and crooked

" By the strong shepherd who, from out his stock
Of aids proceeds to treat each ailing fleece,
Here stimulate to growth, curtail and dock

" There, baldness or excrescence, — that, with grease,
This, with up-grubbing of the bristly patch
Born of the tick-bite. How supreme a peace

" Steals o'er the Statist, — while, in wit, a match
For shrewd Ahithophel, in wisdom . . . well,
His name escapes me — somebody, at watch

" And ward, the fellow of Ahithophel
In guidance of the Chosen ! " — at which word
Eyes closed and fast asleep the Rabbi fell.

"Cold weather!" shivered Tsaddik. "Yet the hoard
Of the sagacious ant shows garnered grain,
Ever abundant most when fields afford

"Least pasture, and alike disgrace the plain
Tall tree and lowly shrub. 'T is so with us
Mortals: our age stores wealth ye seek in vain

"While busy youth culls just what we discuss
At leisure in the last days: and the last
Truly are these for Jochanan, whom thus

"I make one more appeal to! Thine amassed
Experience, now or never, let escape
Some portion of! For I perceive aghast

"The end approaches, while they jeer and jape,
These sons of Shimei: 'Justify your boast!
What have ye gained from Death by twelve months' rape?'

"Statesman, what cure hast thou for — least and most —
Popular grievances? What nostrum, say,
Will make the Rich and Poor, expertly dosed,

"Forget disparity, bid each go gay
That, with his bauble, — with his burden, this?
Propose an alkahest shall melt away

"Men's lacquer, show by prompt analysis
Which is the metal, which the make-believe,
So that no longer brass shall find, gold miss

"Coinage and currency? Make haste, retrieve
The precious moments, Master!" Whereunto
There snarls an "Ever laughing in thy sleeve,

"Pert Tsaddik? Youth indeed sees plain a clue
To guide man where life's wood is intricate:
How shall he fail to thrid its thickest through

"When every oak-trunk takes the eye? Elate
He goes from bole to brushwood, plunging finds —
Smothered in briars — that the small 's the great!

"All men are men: I would all minds were minds!
Whereas 't is just the many's mindless mass
That most needs helping: laborers and hinds

"We legislate for — not the cultured class
Which law-makes for itself nor needs the whip
And bridle, — proper help for mule and ass,

"Did the brutes know! In vain our statesmanship
Strives at contenting the rough multitude:
Still the ox cries 'T is me thou shouldst equip

"'With equine trappings!' or, in humbler mood,
'Cribful of corn for me! and, as for work —
Adequate rumination o'er my food!'

"Better remain a Poet! Needs it irk
Such an one if light, kindled in his sphere,
Fail to transfuse the Mizraim cold and murk

"Round about Goshen? Though light disappear,
Shut inside, — temporary ignorance
Got outside of, lo, light emerging clear

"Shows each astonished starer the expanse
Of heaven made bright with knowledge! That 's the way,
The only way — I see it at a glance —

"To legislate for earth! As poet. . . . Stay!
What is . . . I would that . . . were it . . . I had
been . . .
O sudden change, as if my arid clay

"Burst into bloom! . . ." "A change indeed, I ween,
And change the last!" sighed Tsaddik as he kissed
The closing eyelids. "Just as those serene

"Princes of Night apprised me! Our acquist
Of life is spent, since corners only four
Hath Aisch, and each in turn was made desist

"In passage round the Pole (O Mishna's lore —
Little it profits here!) by strenuous tug
Of friends who eked out thus to full fourscore

"The Rabbi's years. I see each shoulder shrug!
What have we gained? Away the Bier may roll!
To-morrow, when the Master's grave is dug,

"In with his body I may pitch the scroll
I hoped to glorify with, text and gloss,
My Science of Man's Life: one blank 's the whole!

"Love, war, song, statesmanship — no gain, all loss,
The stars' bestowment! We on our return
To-morrow merely find — not gold but dross,

"The body not the soul. Come, friends, we learn
At least thus much by our experiment —
That — that . . . well, find what, whom it may concern!"

But next day through the city rumors went
Of a new persecution; so, they fled
All Israel, each man, — this time, — from his tent,

Tsaddik among the foremost. When, the dread
Subsiding, Israel ventured back again
Some three months after, to the cave they sped

Where lay the Sage, — a reverential train!
Tsaddik first enters. "What is this I view?
The Rabbi still alive? No stars remain

"Of Aisch to stop within their courses. True,
I mind me, certain gamesome boys must urge
Their offerings on me: can it be — one threw

"Life at him and it stuck? There needs the scourge
To teach that urchin manners! Prithee, grant
Forgiveness if we pretermit thy dirge

"Just to explain no friend was ministrant,
This time, of life to thee! Some jackanapes,
I gather, has presumed to foist his scant

"Scurvy unripe existence — wilding grapes
Grass-green and sorrel-sour — on that grand wine,
Mighty as mellow, which, so fancy shapes

"May fitly image forth this life of thine
Fed on the last low fattening lees — condensed
Elixir, no milk-mildness of the vine!

"Rightly with Tsaddik wert thou now incensed
Had he been witting of the mischief wrought
When, for elixir, verjuice he dispensed!"

And slowly woke, — like Shushan's flower besought
By over-curious handling to unloose
The curtained secrecy wherein she thought

Her captive bee, mid store of sweets to choose,
Would loll, in gold pavilioned lie unteased,
Sucking on, sated never, — whose, O whose

Might seem that countenance, uplift, all eased
Of old distraction and bewilderment,
Absurdly happy? "How ye have appeased

"The strife within me, bred this whole content,
This utter acquiescence in my past,
Present and future life, — by whom was lent

"The power to work this miracle at last, —
Exceeds my guess. Though — *ignorance confirmed*
By knowledge sounds like paradox, I cast

"Vainly about to tell you — fitlier termed —
Of calm struck by encountering opposites,
Each nullifying either! Henceforth wormed

"From out my heart is every snake that bites
The dove that else would brood there: doubt, which kills
With hiss of 'What if sorrows end delights?'

"Fear which stings ease with 'Work the Master wills!'
Experience which coils round and strangles quick
Each hope with 'Ask the Past if hoping skills

"'To work accomplishment, or proves a trick
Wiling thee to endeavor! Strive, fool, stop
Nowise, so live, so die — that's law! why kick

"'Against the pricks?' All out-wormed! Slumber, drop
Thy films once more and veil the bliss within!
Experience strangle hope? Hope waves a-top

" Her wings triumphant! Come what will, I win,
Whoever loses! Every dream 's assured
Of soberest fulfilment. Where 's a sin

" Except in doubting that the light, which lured
The unwary into darkness, meant no wrong
Had I but marched on bold, nor paused immured

" By mists I should have pressed thro', passed along
My way henceforth rejoicing? Not the boy's
Passionate impulse he conceits so strong,

" Which, at first touch, truth, bubble-like, destroys, —
Not the man's slow conviction 'Vanity
Of vanities — alike my griefs and joys!'

" Ice! — thawed (look up) each bird, each insect by —
(Look round) by all the plants that break in bloom,
(Look down) by every dead friend's memory

" That smiles 'Am I the dust within my tomb?'
Not either, but both these — amalgam rare —
Mix in a product, not from Nature's womb,

" But stuff which He the Operant — who shall dare
Describe His operation? — strikes alive
And thaumaturgic. I nor know nor care

" How from this tohu-bohu — hopes which dive,
And fears which soar — faith, ruined through and through
By doubt, and doubt, faith treads to dust — revive

" In some surprising sort, — as see, they do! —
Not merely foes no longer but fast friends.
What does it mean unless — O strange and new

"Discovery! — this life proves a wine-press — blends
Evil and good, both fruits of Paradise,
Into a novel drink which — who intends

"To quaff, must bear a brain for ecstasies
Attempered, not this all-inadequate
Organ which, quivering within me, dies

"— Nay, lives! — what, how, — too soon, or else too late —
I was — I am . . . " ("He babbleth!" Tsaddik mused)
"O Thou Almighty who canst re-instate

"Truths in their primal clarity, confused
By man's perception, which is man's and made
To suit his service, — how, once disabused

"Of reason which sees light half shine half shade,
Because of flesh, the medium that adjusts
Purity to his visuals, both an aid

"And hindrance, — how to eyes earth's air encrusts,
When purged and perfect to receive truth's beam
Pouring itself on the new sense it trusts

"With all its plenitude of power, — how seen
The intricacies now, of shade and shine,
Oppugnant natures — Right and Wrong, we deem

"Irreconcilable? O eyes of mine,
Freed now of imperfection, ye avail
To see the whole sight, nor may uncombine

"Henceforth what, erst divided, caused you quail —
So huge the chasm between the false and true,
The dream and the reality! All hail,

"Day of my soul's deliverance — day the new,
The never-ending! What though every shape
Whereon I wreaked my yearning to pursue

"Even to success each semblance of escape
From my own bounded self to some all-fair
All-wise external fancy, proved a rape

"Like that old giant's, feigned of fools — on air,
Not solid flesh? How otherwise? To love —
That lesson was to learn not here — but there —

"On earth, not here! 'T is there we learn, — there prove
Our parts upon the stuff we needs must spoil,
Striving at mastery, there bend above

"The spoiled clay potsherds, many a year of toil
Attests the potter tried his hand upon,
Till sudden he arose, wiped free from soil

"His hand cried 'So much for attempt — anon
Performance! Taught to mould the living vase,
What matter the cracked pitchers dead and gone?'

"Could I impart and could thy mind embrace
The secret, Tsaddik!" "Secret none to me!"
Quoth Tsaddik, as the glory on the face

Of Jochanan was quenched. "The truth I see
Of what that excellence of Judah wrote,
Doughty Halaphta. This a case must be

"Wherein, though the last breath have passed the throat,
So that 'The man is dead' we may pronounce,
Yet is the Ruach — (thus do we denote

" The imparted Spirit) — in no haste to bounce
From its entrusted Body, — some three days
Lingers ere it relinquish to the pounce

" Of hawk-clawed Death his victim. Further says
Halaphta, ' Instances have been, and yet
Again may be, when saints, whose earthly ways

" ' Tend to perfection, very nearly get
To heaven while still on earth : and, as a fine
Interval shows where waters pure have met

" ' Waves brackish, in a mixture, sweet with brine,
That 's neither sea nor river but a taste
Of both — so meet the earthly and divine

" ' And each is either.' Thus I hold him graced —
Dying on earth, half inside and half out,
Wholly in heaven, who knows ? My mind embraced

" Thy secret, Jochanan, how dare I doubt ?
Follow thy Ruach, let earth, all it can,
Keep of the leavings !" Thus was brought about

The sepulture of Rabbi Jochanan :
Thou hast him, — sinner-saint, live-dead, boy-man, —
Schiphaz, on Bendimir, in Farzistan !

NOTE. — This story can have no better authority than that of the treatise, existing dispersedly in fragments of Rabbinical writing, משר של רבים נרים, from which I might have helped myself more liberally. Thus, instead of the simple reference to " Moses' stick," — but what if I make amends by attempting three illustrations, when some thirty might be composed on the same subject, equally justifying that pithy proverb משה לא קם כמשה ממשה עד

I.

Moses the Meek was thirty cubits high,
The staff he strode with — thirty cubits long:
And when he leapt, so muscular and strong
Was Moses that his leaping neared the sky
By thirty cubits more: we learn thereby
He reached full ninety cubits — am I wrong? —
When, in a fight slurred o'er by sacred song,
With staff outstretched he took a leap to try
The just dimensions of the giant Og.
And yet he barely touched — this marvel lacked
Posterity to crown earth's catalogue
Of marvels — barely touched — to be exact —
The giant's ankle-bone, remained a frog
That fain would match an ox in stature: fact!

II.

And this same fact has met with unbelief!
How saith a certain traveller? "Young, I chanced
To come upon an object — if thou canst,
Guess me its name and nature! 'T was, in brief,
White, hard, round, hollow, of such length, in chief,
— And this is what especially enhanced
My wonder — that it seemed, as I advanced,
Never to end. Bind up within thy sheaf
Of marvels, this — Posterity! I walked
From end to end, — four hours walked I, who go
A goodly pace, — and found — I have not balked
Thine expectation, Stranger? Ay or No?
'T was but Og's thigh-bone, all the while, I stalked
Alongside of: respect to Moses, though!"

III.

Og's thigh-bone — if ye deem its measure strange,
Myself can witness to much length of shank
Even in birds. Upon a water's bank
Once halting, I was minded to exchange

Noon heat for cool. Quoth I "On many a grange
I have seen storks perch — legs both long and lank :
Yon stork's must touch the bottom of this tank,
Since on its top doth wet no plume derange
Of the smooth breast. I'll bathe there!" "Do not so!"
Warned me a voice from heaven. "A man let drop
His axe into that shallow rivulet —
As thou accountest — seventy years ago :
It fell and fell and still without a stop
Keeps falling, nor has reached the bottom yet."

NEVER THE TIME AND THE PLACE.

Never the time and the place
And the loved one all together!
This path — how soft to pace!
This May — what magic weather!
Where is the loved one's face?
In a dream that loved one's face meets mine,
But the house is narrow, the place is bleak
Where, outside, rain and wind combine
With a furtive ear, if I strive to speak,
With a hostile eye at my flushing cheek,
With a malice that marks each word, each sign!
O enemy sly and serpentine,
Uncoil thee from the waking man!
Do I hold the Past
Thus firm and fast
Yet doubt if the Future hold I can?
This path so soft to pace shall lead
Thro' the magic of May to herself indeed!
Or narrow if needs the house must be,

Outside are the storms and strangers: we —
Oh, close, safe, warm sleep I and she,
— I and she!

PAMBO.

Suppose that we part (work done, comes play)
With a grave tale told in crambo
— As our hearty sires were wont to say —
Whereof the hero is Pambo?

Do you happen to know who Pambo was?
Nor I — but this much have heard of him:
He entered one day a college-class,
And asked — was it so absurd of him? —

"May Pambo learn wisdom ere practise it?
In wisdom I fain would ground me:
Since wisdom is centred in Holy Writ,
Some psalm to the purpose expound me!"

"That psalm," the Professor smiled, "shall be
Untroubled by doubt which dirtieth
Pellucid streams when an ass like thee
Would drink there — the Nine-and-thirtieth.

"Verse first: *I said I will look to my ways*
That I with my tongue offend not.
How now? Why stare? Art struck in amaze?
Stop, stay! The smooth line hath an end knot!

"He 's gone! — disgusted my text should prove
Too easy to need explaining?
Had he waited, the blockhead might find I move
To matter that pays remaining!"

Long years went by, when — "Ha, who's this?
Do I come on the restive scholar
I had driven to Wisdom's goal, I wis,
But that he slipped the collar?

"What? Arms crossed, brow bent, thought-immersed!
A student indeed! Why scruple
To own that the lesson proposed him first
Scarce suited so apt a pupil?

"Come back! From the beggarly elements
To a more recondite issue
We pass till we reach, at all events,
Some point that may puzzle . . . Why 'pish' you?"

From the ground looked piteous up the head:
"Daily and nightly, Master,
Your pupil plods thro' that text you read,
Yet gets on never the faster.

"At the self-same stand, — now old, then young!
I will look to my ways — were doing
As easy as saying! — *that I with my tongue*
Offend not — and 'scape pooh-poohing

"From sage and simple, doctor and dunce?
Ah, nowise! Still doubts so muddy
The stream I would drink at once, — but once!
That — thus I resume my study!"

Brother, brother, I share the blame,
Arcades sumus ambo!
Darkling, I keep my sunrise-aim,
Lack not the critic's flambeau,
And *look to my ways*, yet, much the same,
Offend with my tongue — like Pambo!

NOTES.

The Agamemnon of Æschylus.

Agamemnon opens with the speech of a watchman. He has been stationed on the palace roof for a year looking out for the beacon which, according to Klutaimnestra's plan, is to bring news of the fall of Troy. His mutterings and forebodings are cut short by the flare of the beacon, and, as he shouts the news, he intimates that his sympathies are with King Agamemnon, and that he might say more but will not. A Choros of Elders then rehearses the history of the departure of the Greeks for Troy, ten years before, making significant remarks upon Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter in order to secure favorable winds for the expedition to bring back his brother's captured wife, the deed in which the play is rooted, for that wrong still rankles in Klutaimnestra's breast. Queen Klutaimnestra, entering, surprises the Elders with the announcement that Troy was taken that night. They cannot believe it, and question how she could have heard of it so quickly. After hearing her story of the chain of beacon fires that brought the news, and her vivid picture of the sacking of the city, they revert to events of the past concerning Helen's capture, and are still doubtful of the Queen's news till a Herald entering announces the King's return. Agamemnon entering is received obsequiously by the Queen, and, yielding to her wishes, passes over the purple robes spread in his path to honor him, and enters the palace. Kassandra, King Priam's daughter, now a captive in Agamemnon's train, then prophesies his impending doom;

a shriek is heard from within, but the Choros of many minds, confused, still hesitates; the Queen re-enters and exultingly declares that she has killed the King, and mingles with the lamentations of the Choros her boast of her successful coalition with Aigisthos. Aigisthos then enters, and he and the Choros mutually exasperate each other till the Queen intervenes, deprecating further violence and establishing her will.

Of Browning's translation of the "Agamemnon," one of the most competent and unprejudiced of classicists Mahaffy, in his "History of Classic Greek Literature" (1891, vol. i. part ii. p. 44), says: "Robert Browning has given us an over-faithful version from his matchless hand — matchless, I conceive, in conveying the deeper spirit of the Greek poets. But in this instance he has outdone his original in ruggedness, owing to his excess of conscience as a translator."

Line 3. *The Atreidai:* the sons of Atreus, Agamemnon and Menelaos.

9. *Troia:* Troy, or Ilion (see **28**), the city of Asia Minor to which Alexandros (see **59**), or Paris, the King of Troy's son, carried off Helen, the wife of Menelaos, and which the Greeks were in consequence besieging.

11. *Man's-way-planning*, etc.: so prevails the Queen's bold way of doing a man's business with a woman's sanguine imagination.

32. *Thrice-six:* the highest throw in gambling, three dice being used in the game common in Attica.

35. *On tongue a big ox has trodden:* this is thought to be a Greek proverbial expression, possibly also signifying that not merely a heavy weight but a bribe keeps him mum.

39. *Priamos' great match:* King Priam of Troy's pair of antagonists, Agamemnon, King of the Argives, and his brother.

44. *Clamoring "Ares"*: shouting for war, — "Ares" being the Greek name for the god of war, — like vultures whose nest has been robbed.

52. *Apollon, Pan or Zeus:* gods of the Sun, the Earth, or the Heavens who have power to employ the punishing power, the *Erinus* (see 57) to avenge wrong; Zeus, as "Guardian of the guest," sending the two Kings to avenge the wrong done Menelaos by Alexandros when as his guest he robbed him of his wife.

65. *Danaoi:* a name given to the people of Argos and to all the Greeks. — *Troes:* the Trojans.

85. *Tundareus:* king of Lacedæmon, who married Leda, mother of Helen as well as Klutaimnestra.

112. *Teukris land:* the land of Teucer, founder of Troy.

114. "*Achaian's two-throned empery*": the brother-kings' dominion over the people of Achaia, or Greece.

122. *Linos:* a legendary young poet and musician, son of Apollo, whose mother was forced to abandon him to be brought up by shepherds, and who was torn in pieces by dogs. He became typical, like Adonis and Hyacinth, of life cut off untimely, or of the youth of the year perishing with the dog-days. In his honor a festival of children and mourning mothers was held every year, when the "Linos-song" was sung, this dirge becoming an emblem of lamentation, and the word Linos equivalent to "Woe!"

138. *The virgin Artemis:* the kindly goddess who cared for all mothers, whether beast or human, and who is here supposed to resent the eagles' feast on the mother-hare, the portent of the chieftains' sacrifice of Iphigenia, and yet to have needed propitiating by that sacrifice, lest she, the unmarried huntress-god, hold back the ships of these Greek husbands.

153. *Ieïos Paian:* Apollo, the brother of Artemis, the merciful god, powerful to avert his sister's ill-will.

164. *That old children's fate:* refers to the feast of Thuestes, ancestor of the house of Atreus, whose brother slew his children and gave them to their father at a banquet. From this old woe a new woe of the same sort is bred. See later references to this, 1645 foll.

165. *Kalchas:* the Greek soothsayer or "prudent army prophet" (see 124), who interpreted the omen of the birds and the hare and decreed the sacrifice of Iphigenia.

180. *Whosoever was the great of yore . . . and who it was that after came to be:* the gods before Zeus; Uranos, and then Cronos.

204. *Kalchis:* a town in Eubœa, near Athens.

205. *Aulis:* a town opposite on the mainland. — *Winds which post from Strumon:* adverse winds blowing across the Ægean from the Strumonic Gulf of Thrace, north-east from Aulis.

278. *The Apian land:* land of the Argives; so called from Apis, a physician who was said to have freed it from monsters. See Æschylus, "The Suppliants," line 259.

302. *Hephaistos:* the god of fire. — *Ide:* Mount Ida, near Troy.

305. *Lemnos*, an island westward from Troy in the Ægean Sea.

306. *The Athoan summit:* Mount Athos on the Peninsula of Macedonia.

310. *Makistos:* a mountain of Eubœa.

313. *Euripos:* the strait between Eubœa and Bœotia.

314. *Messapios:* on the coast of Bœotia.

318. *Asopos:* over the plains of the Asopos River in Bœotia.

319. *Mount Kithairon:* in the southern part of Bœotia.

323. *Lake Gorgopis:* a bay of the Corinthian Gulf.

324. *Mount Aigiplanktos:* in Megaris.

329. *Strait Saronic:* in the Saronic Gulf.

331. *Mount Arachnaios:* a few miles from Argos and visible from the palace.

334. *Rules prescribed*, etc.: in the Lampadephoria or torch-race games, described by Pausanias, i. 30, 2.

381. *Ate:* the goddess of revenge.

438. *Aphrodite:* the goddess of love.

533. *Puthian:* Apollo.

535. *Skamandros:* a river of Troas.

560. *Priamidai:* the descendants of Priam.

635. *Bronze-dippings:* the dipping or tempering of bronze, an art familiar to blacksmiths, but an unknown mystery to a Queen.

668. *Erinues:* the Furies.

681. *Helios:* the sun.

690. *Water-Haides:* another world of sea.

712. *Zephuros:* the west wind.

717. *Simois:* a river in Troas, rises in Mount Ida and flows into the Xanthus.

830. *The Argeian monster:* the wooden horse by means of which Troy was taken. Odyssey, iv. 353; Æneid, ii.

832. *The Pleiads:* the Constellation of seven stars so named for the seven daughters of Atlas.

876. *Triple-bodied Geruon:* fabled to have three bodies and three heads: it was one of Herakles' seven labors to kill him.

887. *Strophios the Phokian:* with whom Klutaimnestra's son Orestes found refuge.

1034. *Alkmenê's child:* Herakles.

1055. *Kars:* mutes.

1066. *Ototoi:* alas!

1068. *Loxias:* a name for Apollo.

1112. *Papai, papai:* O strange! wonderful!

1159. *Itus*, or *Itys:* Philomela changed into a nightingale and ever telling her sad tale of her sister's son Itus. Odyssey, xix. 518.

1172. *Orthian style:* crying out like the Spartan boys who are flogged at the altar of Artemis.

1179. *Kokutos and Acheron:* rivers of the under-world; Kokutos river of wailing, Acheron river of woe.

1258. *Some amphisbaina:* double goer, a serpent with heads at both ends. — *Skulla:* a sea-monster. Odyssey, xii. 85–100.

1281. *Lukeion:* a name for Apollo.

1336. *Surian:* Syrian.

1476. *Chruseids:* daughters of Chryses. Iliad, i. 133-144.

1481. *Swan-fashion . . . dying:* see "Phædo," 85 — Because the swans are sacred to Apollo, and have the gift of prophecy . . therefore they sing and rejoice "when they die, anticipating the good things of another world"

1514. *Tantalidai:* descendants of Tantalus, father of Pelops, who was father of Thuestes.

1627. *Daimon of the Pleisthenidai:* the genius of the family of Pleisthenes, father of Tantalos, ancestor of Agamemnon.

1649. *Thuestes:* son of Pelops, brother of Atreus.

1661. *Pelopidai:* descendants of Pelops, son of Tantalus.

La Saisiaz.

The Prologue is a lyrical expression of a soul disengaged by death from the body, disporting itself in freedom from any of its old annoyances while the body finds pleasurable rest in its native earth.

La Saisiaz commemorates the sudden death of a friend with whom Browning had intended to climb Mount Salève; relates his own ascent alone, five days later, in fulfilment of the plan she had cherished; and, recalling the associations of her last days, inquires what proof there is that the soul survives the body, and how much or how little assurance there is in his own faith in the life beyond death.

To put such a question to himself is to assume that he can answer it, and he declares, therefore, that the two-fold consciousness thus implied of self-existence and other-existence — the one called "soul," the other "God" — constitute his only facts, the proof of them as facts consisting in their surpassing his power to prove them such.

For facts beyond these there is no further proof that does not involve surmises which cannot endure probing. God's goodness, wisdom, and power, or man's need

urged as reasons for a future life, all arouse counter-objections which force him to give them up and hold to self-consciousness as already caused and itself effective of all its experiences and conclusions, and thereby satisfactory to itself, although not so to be assumed for any other personality, each being sufficient only for itself. Thence his general assumption that every mortal has a world of his own, and the supposition that God's world on the infinite plane inheres to God as necessarily as man's to man on his plane.

His own conviction is that there is no reconciliation of wisdom, goodness, and power with imperfection, evil, and failure if earth life and time be not man's learning-space. This conviction, however, he acknowledges is conditioned on his own personality; and the desire for a more objective assurance of a future life and a meeting with his friend is met by a silence which permits hope and fear equally; surmise beyond this fact being vain, from the fact alone comes the better assurance. The solitary soul — *i. e.*, the mere consciousness of self-existence — stands as umpire between the surmises of Fancy and the conclusions of Reason as to what would be the consequences in life if all were as Fancy would have it. Fancy surmises that not only is there God and Soul now, but also a better life after death. Reason, taking this as a fact, proceeds to see how it will work, and concludes that man will decide to die at once for the sake of a better future life. Fancy then finds it necessary to affirm punishment to him who curtails life, reward for who lives out his term. Reason concludes in that case that, whether actively or passively employed, this life is worth nothing but to wait for the next. Fancy is forced, then, to suppose that gain or loss in the next life depends on good or evil done in this. Reason thereupon shows that it takes the quality of goodness or evil away from a man's act to make his future welfare dependent upon his present well-doing; for he either does what he must do, if he must, or if the law is not so stringent eludes it if he

may ; or what sort of law is it which is subject to man's will and pleasure ? Whereas, were it simply a question not of an imposed law, but merely of the existence of God and soul, it is a sufficient hypothesis that the soul's earthly life-allotment is its exercise-ground. Thus, step by step, Fancy conducts Reason back to the mere fact, authorizing equally with fear the hope in which the poet puts his faith.

Conviction, being personal, is stronger and more influential in some men than in others ; and as in looking down from Mount Salève, the poet stands within hail of places associated with Rousseau, Byron, Gibbon, and Voltaire, — each of whom impressed his peculiar point of view upon the world, — the idea of the influence Fame wields suggests to him the image of a colossal beacon — such as brought the news of the fall of Troy — made up of the solid knowledge of a Gibbon, the writhing snake-fire wit of a Voltaire, the resinous brilliancy of a Rousseau, and the resistless poetic gift of a Byron, and he craves the power to uplift such a mighty torch of influence over the multitude. Although aware that here and there an independent mind would distinguish between proof and persuasion, he would enable those who needed such help to rest confidently upon his sufficient faith in Soul and God.

In conclusion, he describes the impulse that came to him in London to follow out the chain of thought more hotly forged at Salève. That experience he has here saved and expressed. Of other such experiences, more deeply rooted in his life, which would cost him too great an upheaval to evoke, this is but an indication.

A. E. S. September 14, 1877 : Ann Egerton Smith, died September 14, 1877, while with Browning and his sister at a villa in the mountains near Geneva called " La Saisiaz," which in the Savoyard dialect means " The Sun."

The germ of " La Saisiaz " appears in a letter Browning sent a year earlier to a correspondent who, thinking she was about to die, wrote to thank the poet for the spirit-

ual cheer his poems, especially "Rabbi ben Ezra" and "Abt Vogler," had given her. The purely personal nature of faith, and the power of genius to lead and persuade the bulk of mankind to believe as it believes, are the ideas of "La Saisiaz," which come out in Browning's reply to her: —

"19 WARWICK CRESCENT, W., May 11, 1876.

"DEAR FRIEND, — It would ill become me to waste a word on my own feelings, except inasmuch as they can be common to us both in such a situation as you describe yours to be, — and which, by sympathy, I can make mine by the anticipation of a few years at most. It is a great thing — the greatest — that a human being should have passed the probation of life, and sum up its experience in a witness to the power and love of God. I dare congratulate you. All the help I can offer, in my poor degree, is the assurance that I see ever more reason to hold by the same hope, and that by no means in ignorance of what has been advanced to the contrary; and for your sake I would wish it to be true that I had so much of 'genius' as to permit the testimony of an especially privileged insight to come in aid of the ordinary argument. For I know I myself have been aware of the communication of something more subtle than a ratiocinative process, when the convictions of 'genius' have thrilled my soul to its depth, as when Napoleon, shutting up the New Testament, said of Christ, 'Do you know that I am an understander of men? Well, He was no man!' ('Savez-vous que je me connais en hommes? Eh bien, celui-là ne fut pas un homme.') Or as when Charles Lamb, in a gay fancy with some friends as to how he and they would feel if the greatest of the dead were to appear suddenly in flesh and blood once more, on the final suggestion, 'And if Christ entered this room?' changed his manner at once, and stuttered out, — as his manner was when moved, — 'You see, if Shakespeare entered we should all rise; if *He* appeared, we must kneel.'

Or, not to multiply instances, as when Dante wrote what I will transcribe from my wife's Testament, wherein I recorded it fourteen years ago, — 'Thus I believe, thus I affirm, thus I am certain it is, that from this life I shall pass to another better, there, where that lady lives of whom my soul was enamoured.'" — *Poet-lore*, February, 1890.

24. *Collonge:* a small town in Switzerland, near Geneva.

37. *Salève:* a mountain southeast of Geneva, whence a view may be gained of Jura and the whole Mont Blanc chain of mountains.

80. *The Marshal's next move . . . Gambetta's counter-play:* the news current at the time of the poem was of the political contest between Marshal Macmahon (1808–1893), then President of the French Republic, and Léon Gambetta (1838–1882), the leader of the Radicals against the reactionary policy and royalist sympathies of the President. Gambetta was arraigned and condemned to three months' imprisonment and a fine of 4,000 francs, but was immediately re-elected to the Assembly and successful in forcing Macmahon's resignation in 1879.

97. *Mazy Arve:* the Arve River, which flows into Lake Geneva.

104. *Calvin:* John (1509–1564), theological reformer and preacher as well as professor of divinity at Geneva.

212. *Phrase the solemn Tuscan fashioned:* Dante's words concerning Beatrice, "Convito," ii. 9, cited in Browning's letter (see above).

353. *Job-like*, etc.: Job ii. 7, 8.

419. *Such grudge in God as scared the ancient Greek:* "The divinity is always jealous and delights in confusion," said Solon, according to Herodotos, i. 32; and Aischulos speaks of the "ancient saying," "From good fortune buds forth insatiate woe." See Browning's translation of the "Agamemnon," this edition, lines 766–772.

546. *Athanasius contra mundum:* Athanasius against the world. Saint Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, born about 297. Defender of the Trinitarianism of the Nicene Creed against the Arian heresy, so prevalent then that, in

the words of Hooker, it was "Athanasius against the whole world."

553. *Bossex:* where Rousseau was born, Jean Jacques (1712–1778), whose "Émile," a moral romance, advocated as an educational reform a return to nature; his strictures against civilized life are summed up by Browning in the dictum, "All that 's good is gone and past," etc. (See 561.)

555. *Diodati:* a villa on the Lake of Geneva, where lived the poet Byron, George Gordon (1788–1824), who left England vowing never to return to it, and whose contempt for man and praise of Nature are indicated in "Dying day with dolphin-hues!" etc. (564–570). The maxim "Of all objects," etc. (568–570), is an allusion to "Childe Harold," which was written by Byron at the villa Diodati.

579. *Pine-tree of Makistos:* from Makistos, the highest point in Eubœa, the light of the chain of beacons bringing news across the Ægean Sea of the fall of Troy, was watched for, as described in the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus (see Browning's translation in this edition, "Agamemnon," lines 302–310), and thence the "pine-tree" torch message was carried to the mainland. Such a giant torch of faith would the poet brandish if he could concentrate in one flame the power belonging to the fame of Rousseau's eloquence, Byron's genius, Gibbon's knowledge, and Voltaire's wit.

582. *Lausanne:* the town in Switzerland where the historian Gibbon, Edward (1737–1794), pursued his studies as a young man, and whither he returned later, completing there his "History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire."

583. *The aspic, — sparkles . . . and now condensed, the python:* the subtle little serpent known as the asp or aspic, and the huge king of snakes, the python, symbolize here the insinuating brilliancy of Wit which Voltaire supplies to the imagined torch, and they picture, also, both the snapping of fire in the boughs of a pine-tree and the whirls

of flame round its trunk almost hiding the solid glowing core of fire representing the pillar of solid learning Gibbon furnishes to the torch.

586. *Ferney:* a village near Geneva, where Voltaire, François Marie Arouet (1694–1778), lived for many years.

588. *Terebinth-tree:* the turpentine tree, typical of the quick-flaming element Rousseau's sympathetic diction would supply to the imagined torch-light.

590. *Diodati:* Byron. "Here called 'Diodati' by that form of metonymy in which a man takes the name of his residence," says Charles Malloy, who first set right, in "'The Significance of the Brand Flamboyant in 'La Saisiaz'" (*Poet-lore*, May, 1898), the errors of Dr. Berdoe concerning this poem.

Dramatic Idyls.

Martin Relph tells a story, just as the speaker used to hear his grandfather tell it, of a queer old man who took up his stand every year on a hill outside the town to confess in anguish to the crowd gathered about him the crucial experience of his life, when as a young man he stood there with a throng of villagers to see a girl shot as a spy. After the captain's bullying harangue, as the soldiers level their guns at the girl, and the crowd is rapt, he alone sees the desperate advance of a belated man bringing a pardon, and fails to cry out and save the girl before she is shot down and the man — her lover — has dropped dead in an agony of despair. He craves the comforting excuses his hearers make for him, and is anxious to believe that he was only scared or dazed, but he both knows and feigns that he does not know that it was a spasm of envy and jealousy which kept him from saving the lovers, and that made him in that instant their murderer.

5. *Methuselah:* Genesis v. 27.

29. *A quarrel . . . between King George and his foes:* George II. is probably the King George meant, and the quarrel the rebellion, 1740–1745, of the "Young Pretender" of the Stuart family, Charles Edward.

134. *For "Vincent" . . . sounds French:* Charles Edward's attempt to win the English throne was befriended by the French, who were therefore regarded with suspicion.

Pheidippides is founded on an historical legend told by the Greek historian Herodotus, the dry bones of which Browning has clothed with life. Instead of a sketch of bare events, Pheidippides himself is made to relate to the archons of Athens his own experiences and emotions as he went on his errand to Sparta for aid to Athens, and on his way back met the great god Pan, who promised Athens aid. The incident of Pan's offering him a worthy reward, and of his last run to Athens to announce the victory of Marathon, is added by the poet.

"And first, before they left the city, the generals sent off to Sparta a herald, one Pheidippides, who was by birth an Athenian, and by birth and practice a trained runner. This man, according to the account which he gave to the Athenians on his return, when he was near Mount Parthenium, above Tegea, fell in with the god Pan, who called him by his name, and bade him ask the Athenians 'wherefore they neglected him so entirely, when he was kindly disposed towards them, and had often helped them in times past, and would do so again in time to come?' The Athenians, entirely believing in the truth of this report, as soon as their affairs were once more in good order, set up a temple to Pan under the Acropolis, and, in return for the message which I have recorded, established in his honor yearly sacrifices and a torch-race.

"On the occasion of which we speak, when Pheidippides was sent by the Athenian generals, and, according to his own account, saw Pan on his journey, he reached Sparta on the very next day after quitting the city of Athens. Upon his arrival he went before the rulers, and said to them: —

"'Men of Lacedæmon, the Athenians beseech you to hasten to their aid, and not allow that state, which is the most ancient in all Greece, to be enslaved by the barbarians. Eretria, look you, is already carried away captive, and Greece weakened by the loss of no mean city.'

"Thus did Pheidippides deliver the message committed to him. And the Spartans wished to help the Athenians, but were unable to give them any present succor, as they did not like to break their established law. It was the ninth day of the first decade, and they could not march out of Sparta on the ninth, when the moon had not reached the full. So they waited for the full of the moon." (*Herodotus*, translated by Rawlinson, vi.)

Χαίρετε, νικῶμεν: Rejoice; we conquer!

4. *Her of the ægis and spear:* Athene (Minerva), who was represented with a shield and spear.

5. *Ye of the bow*, etc.: Artemis (Diana).

8. *Pan:* the god of woods and fields, of flocks and shepherds. He dwelt in caves, wandered on the mountains and in valleys, played with nymphs, and so on. He was represented as having the horns and hoofs of a goat, which caused many to be frightened at his appearance; hence the word "panic." It is said he won the fight at Marathon by causing a panic among the Persians.

9. *Tettix:* a grasshopper. Golden grasshoppers were worn by the Athenians to signify that they were the descendants of the original inhabitants of the country, these insects being supposed to spring from the ground.

12. *Reach Sparta:* at the southernmost part of Hellas, 135 to 140 miles from Athens.

18. *Persia bids Athens proffer slaves'-tribute:* Darius (493 B. C.) sent heralds into all parts of Greece to require, according to the custom of the Persians when they wished to exact submission, earth and water.

19. *Eretria:* one of the principal cities of the island of Eubœa.

20. *Hellas:* Greece.

32 *Phoibos:* Apollo.

33 *Olumpos:* the home of the gods.

47. *Filleted victim:* it was the custom to adorn sacrificial victims with ribbons and wreaths. — *Fulsome:* lavish, liberal.

52. *Parnes:* an error, these mountains being in the north of Attica, outside the route of Pheidippides.

62. *Erebos:* the mysterious darkness under earth.

87. *We stand no more on the razor's edge:* a Greek proverbial expression for extreme peril.

89. *Miltiades:* (died 489), the Greek general who commanded the Athenians at the battle of Marathon, fought 490 B. C.

106. *Akropolis:* the citadel of Athens.

109. *Fennel-field:* in Greek, *Marathon*; and Pan meant when he gave Pheidippides the bunch of fennel to signify the place where the victory would be won.

Halbert and Hob is a story of hereditary heartlessness, a father and son repeating in their lives the brutalization and social isolation of the father and son preceding them, and re-echoing, to the very hour and place, the quarrel of a generation earlier: but with the repetition of violence there is an inner force that also stirs again, the father's memory of the quarrel with his father unnerving him and moving him to make an effectual appeal to his son to hear the inner voice and pause, as he had paused. Turning, side by side, the two silently await the stroke of death that comes by morning to the father and to the son a palsy of remorse; the "reason *in* nature for these hard hearts" being shown thus to be accompanied by a reason *beyond* nature for their sudden softening.

The poem was suggested by an incident cited in Aristotle's "Ethics," vii. 6: "Anger and asperity are more natural than excessive and unnecessary desires. Thus one who was accused of striking his father said, as an apology for it, that his own father, and even his grandfather, had struck his; 'and he also' (pointing to his child) 'will strike me, when he becomes a man; for it runs in our

family.' A certain person, also, being dragged by his son, bid him stop at the door, for he himself had dragged his father as far as that."

65. "*Is there a reason in nature for these hard hearts?*" *O Lear:* "Is there any cause in nature that makes these hard hearts?" "Lear," iii. 6, 81.

Ivàn Ivànovitch is a vivid re-picturing of a typical Russian folk-tale. It is cited as an illustration of the way the deft Russian carpenter makes his axe a sufficient tool for any purpose, practical or judicial. Ivàn was exercising his axe on a ship's mast, when sledge-bells announced the arrival of a woman, half dead with fright, who, as soon as she is revived, tells her story of being chased by wolves and having her three children one by one torn from her. Ivàn's axe promptly enacts his sentence upon a mother who permitted herself to survive her children. The village magnates then hear all this at the church porch, and, despite the chief proprietor's demurrer that although to die for others may be applauded, the preservation of self cannot be punished, the priest's decision is accepted that Ivàn executed God's sentence on selfish motherhood. When they send to tell Ivàn that he is free from any penalty, he is found carving a miniature Kremlin with steady precision. From the finishing touch he turns only to reply, "How otherwise?"

Browning went to Russia in 1833 as nominal Secretary of the Russian Consul-General. This poem and the Russian allusions in "Pauline" seem to be fruits of that visit.

14. *In Peter's time when*, etc.: Peter Alexeievitch I. (1672–1725), Czar of Russia, called the "Great" and "Father of his Country," whose reign was but the beginning of the Europeanizing of Russia continued later by the great Empress Catherine and her successors.

19. *Verst:* about two-thirds of a mile.

28. *This highway broad and straight e'en from the Neva's mouth to Moscow's gates of gold:* probably the original of the present Nevski Prospekt, running nearly in

a straight line for four versts from St. Petersburg to the Red Gate and Nicholas statue in Moscow.

35. *Ivàn Ivànovitch:* a common Russian name, meaning literally "Jack father of Jack," popularly accepted as an exemplar of Russian traits, as "Uncle Sam" is of Yankee peculiarities.

48. *Dmìtri:* the same name as Demetrius.

53. *Droug:* Russian for "friend," pronounced "drook."

55. *Mother-kin:* the English equivalent for the Russian diminutive of *màt*, or mother, *màtushka*.

60. *Vàssili:* same name as Basil. The accent should be on the second syllable, Vasìli. — *Sergeì:* Sergius.

72. *Loukèria, Loùscha:* nicknames for Glikeria or Glycera.

135. *Twin-pigeons:* "little pigeon" is a common pet-name; in Russian, *golùbchik*.

136. *Stepàn:* Stephen. *Stiòpka* in the next line and *Stescha*, line 416, are diminutives of the same name.

166. *Teriòscha:* diminutive of Terentii, same name as Terence.

189. *Màrpha:* Martha.

226. *Kìrill:* Cyril.

279. *Pope:* the *pop*, or priest, of the established church in Russia.

281. *The Commune:* according to Stepniak, some of the old communal customs are still permitted in Russia, a Russian village being not an aggregation but an association of individuals holding their land in common and electing the rural executive administration — *Starost* and *Starshinas*.

282. *Stàrosta:* overseer; literally, elder, *staròst*, old age.

284. *Pomeschìk:* landed proprietor, *pomyèshchik*.

317. *Your young men shall see visions:* Joel ii. 28.

404. *The Sacred Pictures:* the *ikons*, mosaics or paintings, of which there are two at least in every Greek church, — one of Christ at the right of the holy doors, one

on the left, of the Theotocos. The ikons carried by the Russian peasants are two or three folding tablets of wood or metal bearing pictures in enamel.

412. *Kremlin:* the historic fortress at Moscow, built in 1156, and made by Peter the Great, who was born there, the palace and coronation-place of the Tsars.

417. *Kàtia:* nickname of Katherine, *Yekaterina.*

421. *Kolokol:* the famous bell of the Kremlin, 19 feet high and 60 feet around, weighing 12,000 pounds, whose bigness is not so big that the Russian fancy does not love to make it still bigger in the many popular tales in which it figures. Pronounced *Kòlkol.*

Tray is a modern poet's description of a hero, the conventional good knight and wicked desperado of the bards of mediævalism, proving alike less refreshing to the soul than this song of Tray, who rescues a drowning beggar-child, and then does not hesitate to duplicate his exploit and save the child's doll. The last touch in this praise of Tray is the picture of the unconscious inferiority of one of the laughing bystanders, who so little appreciates the spiritual quality of simple heroism that he proposes to vivisect the hero's brain and locate his valor. A friend of Browning's witnessed the occurrence in Paris.

4. *Eke:* also; from the Anglo-Saxon *écan*, to augment. — *Habergeon:* neck and breast armor, a small hauberk or mail coat, *habergeon* being the diminutive of *hauberk*, which is literally a neck-defence, from Old High German, *hals*, neck; *bergan*, to protect.

Ned Bratts is a dramatic folk-picture of a hot day in an English court-house, the centre of interest being a married pair of scapegraces who come to declare their guilt, and their conversion by John Bunyan, and who ask to be hung at once to save their souls.

"The story of 'Old Tod,' as told in Bunyan's 'Life and Death of Mr. Badman,' was distinctly in my mind," Browning wrote to Dr. Furnivall, "when I wrote 'Ned Bratts,' at the Splugen, without reference to what I had read when quite a boy." A story of a swearing public-

house keeper whose name was Ned, told by Bunyan, a few pages farther on in the same volume, may have suggested the name of Ned for Bratts. The part of Bunyan and his daughter in this notable conversion is an invention of Browning's, as are also the grotesque eagerness of the reprobates to save their souls, and the chief-justice's loyal ascription of this marvel not to Bunyan's, but to King Charles's piety.

The story of old Tod is given by Bunyan as follows: —

"At a summer assizes holden at Hertford, while the judge was sitting upon the bench, comes this old Tod into the Court, clothed in a green suit, with his leathern girdle in his hand, his bosom open, and all on a dung sweat, as if he had run for his life; and being come in, he spake aloud, as follows: 'My lord,' said he, 'here is the veriest rogue that breathes upon the face of the earth. I have been a thief from a child: when I was but a little one, I gave myself to rob orchards and to do other such like wicked things, and I have continued a thief ever since. My lord, there has not been a robbery committed these many years, within so many miles of this place, but I have either been at it, or privy to it.' The judge thought the fellow was mad, but after some conference with some of the justices, they agreed to indict him; and so they did of several felonious actions; to all of which he heartily confessed guilty, and so was hanged, with his wife at the same time."

1. *'Twas Bedford:* Bunyan was born in Bedford, and was imprisoned in Bedford jail for preaching without having been ordained. Browning lays his scene there instead of in Hertford, as in the story of old Tod, and makes his poem a Hogarthian presentation of the crude and grossly physical yet sincere English nature on which Bunyan's allegory made so strong an impression.

15. *Chief Justice Jukes:* an imaginary figure. — *Brother Small:* also has no place in biographical records; but both, like the *Serjeant Postlethwayte* of line 43, are picturesquely English in type.

71. *Public:* ale-house for the public.

78. *Quean:* Anglo-Saxon, *Cwén*, a woman; the same word as "queen," but when spelled "quean" used as a term of reproach.

79. *Noggin:* Old English, a cup, here meaning a cupful of liquor.

82. *Midden:* Old English, a dung-hill.

97. *Houghed the mare:* cut the sinews of the hind-leg between the knee and the fetlock; from Anglo-Saxon *hôh*, heel.

102. *The Book:* "The Pilgrim's Progress from this World to that which is to Come, delivered under the Similitude of a Dream," by John Bunyan. London. 1678. Bratts's description of it, — "Don't say book — they 're plays, songs," etc., refers to its dialogue form, and occasional verse, which contributed to its extraordinary popularity. A second edition was called for within a year, the demand kept up, and 100,000 copies are said to have been sold before Bunyan died in 1688.

111. *Who wrote it in the Jail:* Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was — until 1885, when another theory was broached — supposed to have been written during his twelve years' imprisonment in Bedford jail (1660–1672). According to the modern theory, however, it was written in the jail on Bedford Bridge, but during a later and shorter imprisonment of six months in 1675–1676.

114. *Gammer:* an old wife; contraction of Anglo-Saxon *gemêder*, godmother. — *A crab on Yule-tide bowl:* an apple roasted in the Christmas ale bowl. "When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl." — Shakespeare's "Love's Labor 's Lost," v. 2, 935.

119. *Gaffer:* an old fellow; contraction of *gefäder*, Anglo-Saxon, godfather.

127. *Those laces . . . you know who makes them best — the Tinker . . . pulled-up for gospelling:* while imprisoned in Bedford jail for preaching to a Baptist congregation, the tinker John Bunyan (1628–1688) supported

himself and his family by making many hundred gross of long tagged laces.

135. *His girl, — the blind young chit, who hawks about his wares:* his eldest daughter Mary, who was blind, and of whom he was especially fond.

156. *Dives:* Luke xvi. 20, cited by Mr. Interpreter to Christian in "Pilgrim's Progress."

157. *Charles:* the II., restored to the throne of England after Cromwell's death, and reigning from 1660 until 1685.

166. *Dreriment:* an Old English word common in Bunyan's time, but now seldom heard.

170. *Why cumbers it the ground:* Luke xiii. 7.

178. *Tophet:* Isaiah xxx. 33, cited by Christian at the opening of the "Pilgrim's Progress."

180. *Outstreats:* an Old English word for "outstreams," as given in "Pilgrim's Progress." Numbers xx. 10.

181. *Be your sins scarlet, wool shall they seem like:* Isaiah i. 18.

201. *Just-lugged bear:* a bear when first seized and lugged, or led, by a rope tied round its head. "1 Henry IV." i. 2, 83.

203. *Christmas was meant for me. A burden*, etc.: refers to the hero of "Pilgrim's Progress," Christian. Bratts is made to get the name wrong, naturally enough, the jollities of Christmas being familiar. Christian, at the opening of Bunyan's book, fears that "this burden that is upon my back will sink me lower than the Grave; and I shall fall into Tophet."

204. *Joseph's sack, — or whose it was, — which held the cup:* the recentness of Bratts's biblical knowledge is to blame for his error. He means Benjamin's sack. Genesis xliv. 12.

211. *Slack straps*, etc.: an allusion to Christian's song in "Pilgrim's Progress," —

> "Must here the burden fall from off my back?
> Must here the strings that bound it to me crack?" etc.

214. *Destruction:* the City of Destruction in Bunyan's book. The *wicket-gate*, 216; *Despond the Slough*, 217; *brave House Beautiful*, 218, are all also allusions to "Pilgrim's Progress," which Bratts has made applicable to his own case in a way to delight the pious author.

222. *The enemy horned and winged:* Apollyon, whom Christian fought with in the valley.

227. *Hopeful:* one of Christian's companions in his progress to Zion.

231. *Did Master Faithful need climb the Delightful Mounts? No, straight to Vanity Fair:* Bunyan makes Faithful suffer execution, and leads him on faster accordingly in his pilgrimage to the Heavenly City than his companions. His lot Bratts hopes to rival, hanging in St. Peter's Green in Bedford amounting to the same thing as Faithful's martyrdom in the "Market Place;" and Bratts looks forward to Faithful's reward, "chariot pair and all." "Delightful Mounts" is Bratts's name for Bunyan's "Delectable Mountains." Vanity Fair attracted Bratts's fancy more than Bunyan would have liked.

246. *Master Worldly-Wiseman:* a character who did not appear in "Pilgrim's Progress" until the second edition was printed, in 1678.

270. *Sackerson:* a Shakespearian name for a bear. "Merry Wives," i. 1.

273. *The Iron Cage, — means the Lost Man:* the backslider who tells Christian how he "was once a fair and flourishing Professor," but "laid the reins upon the neck of my lusts," and is now "a man of Despair" shut up forever "as in this Iron Cage."

292. *Reynard's game, i' feggs!* sly, the game of the fox in faith, "feg" and "feckins" being common English forms of "faith."

303. *Amicus Curiæ:* friend of the Court.

315. *Twelve years' pious reign:* this fixes the time of the poem as 1672 (see note, 157), the year of Bunyan's release from his twelve years' imprisonment.

316. *Astræa Redux:* the reign of justice restored.

328. *Bunyan's Statue:* a bronze statue of Bunyan by Boehm.

Dramatic Idyls.

SECOND SERIES.

Prologue. A mocking little thrust of verse at the inconsistency involved in assuming to understand the subtleties of the human soul when there is no agreement of doctors upon the more obvious working of the bodily functions.

Echetlos illustrates the superior worth of a great deed, in contrast with that of a great name, since a deed can never grow less, while a great name may, as in the case of Miltiades and Themistokles.

The poem is developed from a legend of the battle of Marathon told in Pausanias' "Description of Greece" (book i. chap. 32): "And it chanced, as they say in the battle, that a man of rustic appearance and dress appeared, who slew many of the Persians with a ploughshare, and vanished after the fight: and when the Athenians made enquiry of the oracle, the god gave no other answer, but bade them honor the god *Echetlæus*," — that is, the wielder of the ploughshare.

3. *Marathon:* see notes on "Pheidippides," p. 301.

15. *Kallimachos Polemarch:* Polemarch was the name given to the archon (or ruler, of which there were nine in Athens) who had charge of military affairs; Kallimachos held that office at the time of the battle of Marathon, and was among the brave Greeks who fell.

18. *Sakian:* the *Sakæ* were Scythian tribes bordering on the Bactrians and Sogdians of the East, a part of whom had submitted to pay tribute to Persia.

28. *Woe for the great name Miltiades:* after the battle of Marathon, Miltiades incurred the displeasure of the Athenians by the failure of his siege of the island of Paros, which, it was found, he had undertaken in order to avenge a personal spite. He was indicted and sen-

tenced to pay a fine, but died shortly afterwards of a hurt received at Paros.

29. *Themistokles:* (about 514 B. C. to 449 B. C.), chief archon of Athens. Long prominent for his services both in war and peace, he was at last accused of bribery and ostracized; later, of treason, when he fled from Greece to Artaxerxes, at Sardis, in Persia, who treated him with much favor, making him a satrap or governor.

Clive. An old man's reminiscence of the great English military hero, which suggests the spiritual price paid for the sake of national empire and the element of moral cowardice sometimes lurking beneath acts of physical courage. The old man dwells upon his story while he is sitting lonely over his dessert, just as if his son were present and again leading him on to repeat his favorite anecdote of how he once sought to rouse his old friend Clive from his mental stupor by asking him when he himself felt that he had shown most courage. Clive answered that it was when he felt most fear. When a young clerk gaming with military men of rank, he saw his opponent cheat, accused him of it, was challenged, missed his aim, and while he stood at his foe's mercy persisted in his refusal to take back his words. Suddenly his foe confessed the truth and fled. In that moment, while the cold muzzle of the pistol was at his forehead, he had felt the most fear. His friend's objection that the general of Plassy had met death closer than that, he met with a burst of scorn, which showed that another alternative was in his mind at that moment, his foe might have utterly conquered him by refusing to kill him, but disgracing him forever. It was not mere death, then, but defeat, that he feared, — the inability on his own part to meet a crucial situation except by suicide. But to meet a situation thus, objected his friend, takes courage; despair, it might be called, not fear. Clive mutters to himself, "Yes — courage: only fools will call it fear;" and the next week killed himself.

2. *Clive it was gave England India:* Robert Clive,

born in Shropshire, 1725; was sent to Madras at eighteen in the service of the East India Company. Homesick, in debt, and in danger of losing his situation, he twice tried to shoot himself. The pistol failing to go off, he was impressed with the idea that some great destiny was awaiting him. This destiny seemed accomplished when, at twenty-seven, returning to England, he had made the English the first military power in India. But, on his return to India, 1755–1759, he supplemented his first labors by assuring to the English a political ascendency as well; and his third visit, 1765–1767, crowned his ruder earlier work by putting the English dominance on a sounder basis of integrity than it could before pretend to claim, and giving it an impulse toward a more spiritual ascendency.

8. *Fought Plassy, spoiled the clever foreign game:* the main event of Clive's second period in India, when he had to out-intrigue the conspiring Hindoo chiefs and defeat the Nabob of Bengal acting secretly with the French. He was not sure of his Hindoo ally, and was so far outnumbered that the majority of the council of war he called were opposed to fighting, and Clive agreed that the odds were too great; but after an hour of lonely brooding he decided to meet all hazards, and at Plassy, eighty miles north of Calcutta, with the loss of twenty-two killed and fifty wounded, overcame an army of near sixty thousand, and "annexed and Englished" Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa.

16. *Rummer-glass:* a drinking-glass used for Rhine wine. Dr. Rolfe suggests its derivation from such cups being used at the Römersaal at Frankfort, where the new Emperor's health was drunk, in which case the word is Latin, from *Roma*, Rome; but it may be derived from the low German *römer*, the same as roomy or spacious.

40. *Sustained a siege in Arcot:* an exploit of Clive's first period. After the French took Madras, he seized the occasion to leave his commercial life for an ensignship in the Company's service. The French were driving the

native chief of the Carnatic into narrower quarters in the interest of the rival prince they were putting in his place. To prevent this and the conquest of all India by the French, Clive urged that he be permitted to attack Arcot, the capital of the province of the Carnatic, seventy miles southwest of Madras. He took it, held it against repeated attacks, and so gave the English the position of supremacy in the province long held by the French.

47. *Too much bee's-wing floats my figure:* a metaphor having a double appropriateness, bee's-wing being the name for a film peculiar to port wine and indicative of its age.

59. *Clive crumbled slow in London:* Macaulay, in his famous essay on Clive, says: "He had not yet passed the season of vigorous bodily and mental exertion. But clouds had long been gathering over his mind. . . . From early youth he had been subject to fits of that strange melancholy 'which rejoiceth exceedingly and is glad when it can find the grave.'"

65. *Where a drug-box skulked:* "To obtain ease," writes Macaulay, "he called in the help of opium; and he was gradually enslaved by this dangerous ally."

70. *Worth your Alexanders . . . what said Pitt:* Pitt made a speech in the House of Commons describing Clive as a born general, though trained to the desk instead of to arms, and showing a military genius which the King of Prussia might envy.

91. *This fell in my factor-days . . . slaving at St. David's:* when the English were driven from Fort St. George by the French, Clive had taken refuge at Fort St. David. This story of an incident of his life there Browning heard from Mrs. Jameson, who heard it from Macaulay at Lansdowne House shortly before. Macaulay refers to it in his "Essay," as follows: "Of his personal courage he had, while still a writer [clerk or factor], given signal proof by a desperate duel with a military bully who was the terror of Fort St. David."

112. *Thyrsis locked with Chloe:* pastoral lovers so out

of place here as an allusion as to be an appropriate illustration of the utterly unexpected.

183. *Twenty-five years ago:* he died by his own hand in 1774, at the age of 49, the next week after telling this anecdote (see line 238). As it took place at St. David's when Clive was "one-and-twenty" (see line 198), there is a little discrepancy here.

222. *Rent and taxes for half India, tenant at the Frenchman's will:* the English East India Company paid a yearly rent to the native princes who were so dominated by the French then that they were virtually French agents.

Muléykeh. A graphic Bedouin folk-story of the unselfish love of Hóseyn, the Arab, for his matchless mare, Muléykeh. Duhl in vain tempted his poverty by offering him a thousand camels for her; and his generosity, by craving her as a boon to save his son's life; but when Duhl stole her, and Hóseyn, mounted on her famous sister, had almost caught up to her, for she flagged through missing her master's wonted urging, then his loving pride in her, lest for once she be outspeeded, got the better of his sense of ownership, and he shouted to Duhl his secret way to call out her fleetness — and lost her forever.

34. *Her forefront whitens*, etc.: the Arabs considered it peculiarly fortunate if the white on the horse's forehead spread down to the lip; a white fetlock was also lucky.

61. *I swear by the Holy House:* the family of Mahomet.

Pietro of Abano is a revivified version of a mediæval legend of the famous magician of Padua, whose varied abilities and substantial benefactions to the world earned for him the usual abuse accorded by the dull-witted and superstitious to the man in advance of his time. To him comes a young Greek who is canny enough to desire the wisdom and power which have given Pietro the name of dealing with the Devil, but who is not enlightened enough to appreciate the patient disinterestedness of such a man's life. The wily Greek offers him the love he lacks in exchange for the secret of his skill. For reply Pietro gives him a magic powder. It causes him, in an instant, be-

fore Pietro's "Benedicite" has time to be pronounced, to seem to live through the successive stages of the career he craves, as man of wealth, statesman, and churchman, laying bare the duplicity which hid beneath his pretence of gratitude, the vanity and selfishness masking under the name of philanthropic leadership, and — as he wakes to see Pietro's smile and hear the banging of the door as the persecuted savant goes out and leaves him to himself — giving him a sudden glimpse of the merely spiritual rewards that the genuine lover of knowledge and mankind must be prepared to accept; since real love as a return for such labors is still a dream, and unconscientious cleverness more successful with the masses than with Pietro.

1. *Petrus Aponensis:* Peter or Pietro of Abano (1249–1315), Aponon being the ancient name of the famous medicinal springs of Abano, near Padua, derived from *a*, without, and *πόνος*, pain, near which Peter was born. He was professor of medicine at Padua, had studied at Paris and Constantinople and in the Orient, and was said to keep the seven spirits of philosophy, alchemy, astrology, physic, poetry, music, and painting in seven crystal vases tamed to his will. The Inquisition of 1306 cited him as heretic and atheist. His able defence caused his acquittal. In 1315 he was again cited, but died in time to escape conviction; and although his body was condemned and ordered to be burned, a friend hid it and the sentence was wreaked on his effigy. His statue was placed by the Duke of Urbino among other statues of illustrious men, and the Senate of Padua set it on the gate of the Senate-house. In 1560, in the Church of St. Augustine, a tablet with a Latin epitaph was put up in his memory, and the Rev. John Sharpe, whose paper on Browning's poem appears in the London Browning Society Papers, Part II., found in the wall of the vestibule of the Sacristy of the Church of the Eremitani this inscription: PETRI APONI / Cineres / Ob. an. 1315. / aet. 66.

14. *Petrus ipse:* Peter himself.

39. "*Calculating*," *quoth he:* Browning's own note

gives the Italian lines and a translation of his own. Another version of his made for Father Prout, to which he refers, is given in Prout's "Reliques" as follows:—

> "Studying my cyphers with the compass,
> I find I shall soon be under the daisy;
> Because of my lore, folks make such a rumpus,
> That every dull dog is thereat *unaisy*."

43. *A galley needing neither sails nor oars*, etc.: whether Pietro is anywhere recorded to have anticipated the steamboat by such an invention as is here described, we have not been able to determine; but historians of the steam-engine place in Egypt, in Hiero of Alexandria's (120 B. C.) early experimentation in that direction, the origin of the idea which Pietro is here said to have worked into shape at Cairo; and since the researches of Arago and Figuier it is agreed that the theory of the power of locomotion by steam is very ancient, and that so also is the idea of substituting paddle-wheels for oars. Typically, if not actually, the poet is justified in attributing such a contrivance as he describes to so able and learned a man as Pietro was.

64. *He may not drink . . . milk:* this was one of the tales told of Pietro, indicating, as the Greek is made to suggest, that the learned magician's superiority isolated him from all ordinary social relations.

71. *True moly:* the herb with black root and "blossoms white as milk," which Homer says Hermes gave Odysseus as a charm against the spells of Kirke. "Odyssey," x. 367.

74. *Within my eye its iris mystic-lettered:* an Oriental superstition. Browning, in reply to a query as to the allusion, said that "there was an old superstition that, if you look into the iris of a man's eye, you see the letters of his name, or the word telling his fate."

75. *My ear — its swan-shaped cavity, my emblem:* the shapeliness of the ear has long been considered an index of superiority, the curving lines of the inner part like a swan's neck showing the gift for leadership.

76. *The swan-like nature:* the Greeks called the swan the bird of Apollo (see line **20**); and swans have long been an appanage of royalty not to be owned by the commonalty, being themselves supreme above the herd of bird-kind. The Greek associates them here with leadership as a birthright.

110. *Petri en pulmones:* lo, the lungs of Peter!

119. *Ipse dixi:* I have spoken, or, So let it be, a phrase used at the end of a magician's mandate or of an argument.

125. *Michael of Constantinople, Hans of Halberstadt:* mediæval scientists and sages of Pietro's sort, as the Greek says; the second is before alluded to by Browning in his "Transcendentalism."

144. *Fiat:* decree; from the Latin, let it be done.

151. *De corde natus haud de mente:* born of heart, not of mind.

174. *Bene:* opening syllables of *Benedicite*, Peter's grace, of which the Greek hears so much before the opiate begins its work; the rest, *dicite*, later (line **409**), when he wakes from the spell, having dreamed his dream out in the interval.

182. *Plato's tractate:* "The Republic," whose general aim as to ruling men may be summed up in a few words in book vi. (vol. ii. page 329, of Jowett's translation): "Let there be one man who has a city obedient to his will, and he might bring the ideal polity into being," that one man, it is understood, being wise and good and devoted to the highest Beauty. The Greek professes Plato's way of ruling men.

183. *Dog of Egypt:* Anubis, the dog-faced God of Egypt, of whom sagacity was the especial quality

214. *Jezebel:* 2 Kings ix. 30.

215. *Jam satis:* enough now.

245. *That fabric, Padua's boast:* a hall in Padua in the Palazzo della Ragione, a vast building standing upon open arches. It is said that when the original hall was rebuilt in 1306 by an Austin friar, Frate Gio-

vanni, a great traveller, he asked no other pay for his work than the wood and tiles of the old roof which he was to take down. The interior of the hall is covered by strange mystical paintings designed by Giotto, according to the instructions of Pietro of Abano. The Greek suggests that this hall be the state-house of a new and better rule.

260. *Tantalus's treasure:* evanescent treasure, Tantalus being tortured in Hades by having drink and food forever escape his reach.

281. *Bare feet cling to bole with, while the half-mooned boot we boast:* the boot with a long curved toe, introduced in the eleventh century, sometimes so long as to be fastened up at the knee, which it was the privilege of men of rank and power to wear, while the bare plebeian feet were shod with the mud their soles accumulated.

288. *Dream Elysian:* the Elysian fields or islands of the blessed after death, which the Hellenic mythology opposed to Tartaros, the place of torment, seem to have been shadowy, warranting the illusory quality here belonging to Elysian. The Greek is taking the next step in his Platonic way of ruling men, to deceive their fancies as jockeys fool a horse.

292. *Per Bacco:* by Bacchus.

300. *Salomo si nŏsset* (noisset): if Solomon had but known this.

305. *Teneor vix:* scarcely do I contain myself.

311. *Hactĕnus:* hitherto. The *e* made long for the rhyme's sake.

313. *Nec Ultra Plus:* no farther, the inscription graven by Herakles, according to the legend, on the Pillars of Herakles, now the rocks of Gibraltar, which he tore asunder to join the Mediterranean with the Atlantic.

336. *The crozier . . . the crowbill:* the one, the shepherd's crook of the bishop, emblematic of spiritual sway; the other, — same as crowbar, — of sway over earth.

343. *Manna:* food from heaven. Exodus xvi. 15. — *Peason:* an Old English word for peas.

347. *Pou sto:* where I may stand; Archimedes saying, "Give me a place to stand, and I will move the world."

371. *The Lateran:* the Lateran Palace of the Pope adjoining the church of St. John Lateran in Rome, the head church since the days of Constantine.

375. *Gained the Purple:* the cardinalate, from the color of the hat, stockings, and cassock worn by cardinals. — *Bribed the Conclave:* the meeting of the Sacred College of Cardinals for the election of a new pope by a two-thirds vote on the tenth day after the Pope's death. — *Saw my coop ope:* the Cardinals who meet in this rigidly private election conclave have each a boarded cell, or coop, in the Vatican assigned by lot.

382. *Tithon:* brother of King Priam of Troy, whose beauty made Aurora fall in love with him and carry him to heaven. She asked the fates to make him immortal, but forgot to ask them to preserve his youth, and he became decrepit and begged to die. Not being able to grant this, she changed him into a grasshopper, according to Ovid, "Metamorphoses," 13.

396. *Conciliator Differentiarum:* Conciliator of Differences, Pietro's most famous work.

398. *De Speciebus Ceremonialis Magiæ:* Concerning the Kinds of the Ceremonial of Magic.

401. *The Fisher's ring or foot that boasts the Cross:* the Pope's signet is the ring of the Fisherman after St. Peter. The cross is embroidered on his slipper.

408. *Apage, Sathanas:* avaunt, Satan!

409. *Dicam verbum Salomonis:* I command it in the name of Solomon. The name Sol-Om-On unites the name of the sun in three languages, and makes up a word to conjure by. — *Dicite:* the closing syllables of "benedicite." See line 174.

415. *Benedicite!* used here by the boy as a word of good omen.

416. *Idmen, idmen:* we know, we know!

421. *Scientiæ Compendium:* compendium of science.

422. *Admirationem incutit:* it inspires admiration.

427. *Axe and fasces:* an axe tied with a bundle of rods, — an old Roman badge of authority borne before a magistrate.

428. *Antipope:* usurper of the popedom.

434. *Tiberius:* (42 B. C.–37 A. D.), made Cæsar or Emperor of Rome 14 A.D.

440. *The . . . account . . . told by Suetonius:* according to Suetonius, in his "Lives of the Cæsars," when Tiberius "was marching to Illyricum, he called to consult the oracle of Geryon, near Patuvium [Padua]; and having drawn a lot by which he was desired to throw golden *tali* [dice] into the fountain of Aponus, for an answer to his enquiries, he did so, and the highest numbers came up. And those very *tali* are still to be seen at the bottom of the fountain."

442. *Venus:* the highest throw of the dice. This Roman term for a lucky throw Browning uses again in "At the Mermaid."

444. *Not sung! but lilted*, etc.: Browning gives the rhythm of the metre used, and reveals an unusual bit of personal information, that he often now hums out his metres.

Several variants of the story of a rapid ambitious dream like this of the Greek's are given in *Poet-lore*, iii 577.

Doctor ——. A whimsical rendering of an old Hebrew tale illustrating the ancient proverb, "A bad wife is stronger than death." Satan complaining, on the one day allotted for such fault-finding, that he was wronged by the existence on earth of any rival power to that of his offspring, Death, God gives him leave to go and marry in the flesh, and see for himself if the proverb be justified. Upon doing this, and the time coming for him to give his son a calling, he makes him a doctor, since he is too cowardly for a soldier, too lazy for a lawyer, and his father desires no peer in his own special calling — Divinity. His sufficient qualification for medicine is to be his ability

to see his father in his spirit-person at the bedside of his patients. If he stand at the head, it will be safe to prophesy death, however slight the ailment; if at the foot, or elsewhere, any dose his son pleases to give will promise recovery. With this, Doctor —— soon becomes infallible; but when called one day to cure the Emperor, Death persists in standing at the bed-head, his son vainly begging him for once to shift his place, and let him gain the fortune and the Princess the Emperor promises if he is cured; and then comes the test of the proverb. Remembering it, the son, under pretext of sending for a famous talisman, Jacob's-staff, summons his mother, and so defeats the Devil himself.

The legend is a curious reflex of the Alkestis story as seen through the eyes of Jewish prejudice against women. For a Greek variant of a part of the story, see "The Just One," in "Folk Songs and Tales from Modern Greece." *Poet-lore*, ix. 356.

89. *Galen:* a Greek physician (130–200).

140. *Machaon redivivus:* Machaon come to life again, — a celebrated physician accompanying the Greeks to Troy, was in the wooden horse, and cured Menelaus. See Iliad, ii. 889 and iv. 250.

168. *Meal of dust:* Genesis iii. 14 and ii. 7.

256. *Talmud:* from the Chaldee, meaning doctrine. The book of Hebrew law *Mishna*, and *Gemara*, tradition and comments.

Pan and Luna is a delicately limned night-picture in harmony with an antique nature-myth touched upon by Virgil. It portrays a black night in Arcadia, earth and sky fused in one, till the sudden moon sheds life and light everywhere while she flies unveiled across the sky, and, as if growing aware of the thirst for beauty she arouses, hides her bare orb in a slow-sailing cloud-fleece, only to find that harbor of seeming purity a net of earth-breath, wherein the rude earth-god Pan catches and clasps her in his rough embraces. So happened all the legend intimates of the gift of pure-white fleeces Pan gave Luna, and of the first moon-eclipse.

The motto is the opening of the reference to the legend by Virgil, "if worthy of belief it is;" of the rest of Virgil's allusion Browning gives a translation in the words quoted in lines 97-100.

59. *Amphitrite's dome:* the sea, Amphitrite being the daughter of Oceanus and wife of Poseidon.

70. *The fact as learned Virgil gives it:* in the same Georgic. Browning's lines which follow give the sense of the passage.

Epilogue. A lyrical picture of the contrast between the popular notion of the poet's work, as quick-rooted and easy-growing, like an annual in a flower-garden, and its actual nature, strenuous and persistent in character and nurtured by obstacle, like a slow-growing pine-tree. How truly Browning rated the popular opinion of a poet was shown by the criticism that greeted this song, as if he had drawn a contrast between all other poets and himself. In copying the poem in the autograph album of a young American girl in Venice, October, 1880, he added the stanzas given on page 273 of the last volume of this edition in comment, both on this epilogue itself and on the misplaced criticism it had evoked. His explanation is that when he wrote it he was musing on his "betters, poets dead and gone," and he names Dante as a sufficiently appropriate illustration of the class of poet he had in mind, — a "nation's heritage."

JOCOSERIA.

The title of this volume, writes Browning to a friend, "is taken from the work of Melander (Schwartzmann) [1571–1640, whose book is a miscellany of anecdotes], reviewed, by a curious coincidence, in the *Blackwood* of this month [February, 1883]. I referred to it in a note to 'Paracelsus'" ["such rubbish as Melander's "Jocoseria"]. In another letter he speaks of the volume as "a collection of things gravish and gayish — hence the title 'Jocoseria,' — which is Batavian Latin, I think."

The Prologue may simply express that no beauty is perfect without its complement, love; or it may refer more particularly to Divine love, without which life is incomplete. The latter interpretation is rendered probable on account of the use of the term, "O comer," line 9, which the Rev. J. Sharpe points out is one of the titles of the Messiah in the New Testament. "ὁ ἐρχόμενος," the Future One, He who shall come (Matthew xi. 3; xxi. 9; Luke vii. 19, 20; John xii. 13; vi. 14; xi. 27).

Donald. An anecdote of a sportsman told in a Highland bothie to a band of young Oxford fellows, when their adventures in praise of sport were going the rounds, in order to exemplify the cruel and degrading side of the sportsman's instinct. The teller of the story says he heard it from a ghastly wreck of a man, who burst into just such a merry bothie circle as theirs to tell how once, in taking the short cut over a mountain, at the narrowest part of the footway a stag blocked the path, and how, instead of butting him over the precipice, it halted, and understood the course that flashed upon him, — to let himself down flat and let the beast step over him. This it did, with slow, careful intelligence, when just as the creature stood above him the sportsman got the better of the man in him. He drew out his dirk and stabbed. Over the beast fell, the human beast on top, his life saved, however, by falling on the stag, but his bones so broken that he was a cripple the rest of his days, his only resource hobbling into hunting-bothies with the head and hide of the stag, to tell, for the sake of the food and alms it brought him, his story of huge sport.

5. *Bothy:* a booth or hunting-box.

10. *Trivet:* or trevet, same derivation as "tripod," the three-footed support for a gypsy kettle.

12. *Glenlivet:* Scotch whiskey.

42. *Double-First:* the name at Oxford and Cambridge Universities for honors in two branches of study.

61. *Ross-shire:* the most mountainous of counties in the North of Scotland.

79. *Ben:* the usual Gaelic name for a mountain. — *With an end in "ich":* the usual Gaelic termination; *e. g.*, Ben Vorich.

133. *Volte-face:* turn face-about.

136. *Blondin:* the expert rope-walker.

207. *Goliath:* 1 Samuel xvii. 4.

211. *Tines:* forks of the horns.

234. *As Homer would say*, etc.: Odyssey, i. 63; literally, "teeth-fence."

The story is true, Mrs. Orr says, "repeated to Browning by one who had heard it from the so-called Donald himself." Sir Walter Scott tells it, in "The Keepsake" for 1832, substantially as Browning gives it, and as he also had heard it, with the exception that the mountaineer is going in quest of a sheep or goat missing from his flock instead of to meet a lassie at the bridge below, as Browning perhaps chooses to say. Sir Walter closes his account as follows: "I never could approve of [his] conduct towards the deer in a moral point of view, . . . but the temptation of a hart of grease offering, as it were, his throat to the knife, would have subdued the virtue of almost any deer-stalker."

Solomon and Balkis. An anecdote from the Talmud of the visit of the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, in which they are represented as elaborately questioning each other in order to show off the regard for wisdom of the King, the regard for goodness of the Queen; till in the midst of the fine talk the King's signet ring is accidentally revealed, bearing the Name that compels the truth to be told, whereupon the vanity that really dominates the King's wisdom, and the love of admiration and the fleshly attractions that really allure the Queen's heart are confessed by both, and their high converse on the plane of mind ends in a mere carnal kiss. The account of the visit of the Queen of Sabá or Yemen in Arabia to Solomon in 1 Kings x. 1–13, has its counterpart in many Oriental versions besides those of the Talmud. The Persian poet Jami writes on the same theme.

10. *Vulgo conster:* same as "construe," in vulgar or old-time English.

12. *Spheteron do:* his home.

28. *Wimple:* an old-fashioned kind of plaited hood.

32. *The Ring which bore the Name:* Solomon's signet ring, famed for its magical potency.

46. *Habitat:* the natural environment or home for a plant or animal.

47. *On Lebanon roots the cedar:* Isaiah ii. 13.

48. *Hyssop:* 1 Kings iv. 33; the caper (*Capparis spinosa*), or *asuf* of the Arabs.

Cristina and Monaldeschi is a monologue by Queen Cristina. She is recalling the love of King Francis for Diane de Poitiers while walking in the hall of Fontainebleau which bears tokens memorizing it, and ironically comparing their fidelity with her companion's treacherous love for her. More and more grimly, making use of images the pictures about them suggest to her, she intimates to him that his perfidy to her has been unmasked, while drawing him along with her to the "Gallery of the Deer," where she orders those who are to do her bidding to wreak upon him the vengeance of a wronged Queen.

Cristina of Sweden (1626–1689), daughter of King Gustavus Adolphus, vigorous and original by nature, brilliantly educated, and with marked scientific tastes, succeeded to her father's throne in 1632, but refusing to tie herself in marriage to any one of her many royal suitors, and abdicating, in 1654, at Upsala, in order to lead an unfettered life (see lines 139–141), she went to live in Rome, where she indulged her lover Marquis Monaldeschi in all the honors and favors she could bestow, till he tired of her, sought other loves, ridiculed her, and betrayed her confidences, when she had him stabbed to death in 1658, at Fontainebleau, as the poem tells. By her Act of Abdication she retained sovereign jurisdiction over her servants; and the Marquis was one of these, her "Master of the Horse."

5. "*Quis separabit?*" who shall separate? — the motto

inscribed on the frame of a picture, in the gallery of François Premier and Diane de Poitiers.

13. *Her Crescent with his Salamander-sign:* her emblem the crescent-moon of Diane and Diana the goddess; his the fire-fed salamander; both signs repeated in the decorations of the gallery, on whose symbolical meanings Cristina plays.

105. *Juno strikes Ixion:* the queen of heaven, whom Ixion presumed to offer his love to, according to the myth (see Browning's "Ixion," 79-83), here pictured as striking him. It is ominously pointed out by Cristina.

106. *Primatice:* Primaticcio, Francesco (1504–1570), painter of frescos at Fontainebleau.

107. *Florentine Le Roux:* the French way of naming the Florentine painter Rossi.

112. *Gallery of the Deer:* La Galerie des Cerfs in the Royal Château at Fontainebleau near Paris.

116. *Vowed at Avon:* a village near Fontainebleau. — *Blessed and cursed faith and falsehood:* the Queen asked Monaldeschi, it is said, what should be the penalty of a man who in a similar way betrayed a woman. He replied, "Instant death; 't would be an act of justice." "It is well," she rejoined, "I shall remember your words."

144. *Let Avon tell the rest:* that is to say, let his tomb blab now in Avon church, where his body was buried.

Mary Wollstonecraft and Fuseli: a piteous confession of a scorned and hopeless love, yet, although passionate, utterly incapable of vengefulness.

Mary Wollstonecraft (1759–1797), pioneer in expressing the need of women for greater opportunity in life, is said by her earlier biographers, Godwin and Knowles, to have been ardently in love with Henry Fuseli the artist (1741–1825); by later biographers, C. Kegan Paul and Elizabeth Robins Pennell, this basis for the poem is denied.

Adam, Lilith, and Eve exemplifies the relations of two types of women to a typical man. A stroke of terror wrings the truth from them; the one who really loved him

despite her haughtiness, and the other who married him despite her early love for another, confessing all. Their fear subsiding, they awake to their imprudence, and then pretend they were only fooling him, when he pretends that he knew they were, and so assures them that truth itself has made him no wiser than he was before.

Lilith, according to the Jewish tradition, was Adam's first wife, created when he was, while Eve was formed later from his rib (compare Genesis i. 26 and ii. 22). There is much the same difference attributed to them in Oriental legends as between the fierce Brunhild and the mild Gudrun of Norse mythology.

Ixion. The sinner Ixion is presented suffering eternal punishment in hell, and as the wheel rushes round, the torments of his flesh are transmuted into a rainbow (symbolic of the hope and aspiration that grow out of suffering). Ixion questions the justice of his torment. He first comes to the conclusion that sin is an aberration of sense, and merely the result of external conditions in which the soul of man has no active part. The soul simply dreams; but once fully awakened, it would free itself from this bondage of sense if it were allowed to do so. He argues that Zeus made him, and if he has sinned it is through the bodily senses that Zeus conferred upon him, and if Zeus were the friendly and all-powerful god which he claimed himself to be and which Ixion believed he was, why did he allow these distractions of sense to lead to sin which could only be expiated by eternal punishment? Without body there would have been nothing to obstruct his soul's rush upon the real. With one touch of pitying power Zeus might have dispersed "this film-work, eye's and ear's." Thus it is the fault of Zeus that Ixion had sinned, and having done so will eternal torture bring about any further repentance than he already feels now that his eyes are open? Then follows a comparison between the actions of Zeus, a god, and of Ixion, the human king; and Ixion declares that could he have known all, as Zeus does, he would have warded off evil

from his subjects, would have seen that they were trained aright from the first, — in fact, would not have allowed evil to exist, or, failing this, could he have seen the heart of the criminals and realized how they repented, he would have given them a chance to retrieve their past. What was his sin? It is that of arrogance. Ixion, a mere man, strives to be on an equality with gods. Zeus and Hera may be taken to represent the attributes of power and love as conceived by man in divinity. Ixion, as man, arrogantly supposes that he is capable of putting himself on an equality with divinity by entering into the entire nature of divinity, that out of his finite mind he can construct the absolute god; this is the sin, or aberration of sense, which results in his own downfall. Ixion, now aroused to the fact that the god he has been defying is but his own miserable conception of God, realizes that the suffering caused by his errors is the means through which man struggles toward higher ideals: through evil he is brought to a recognition of good, from his agony is bred the rainbow of hope which ever shines above him glorified by the light from a purity far beyond, all unobstructed.

Ixion, in Greek mythology, was the son of Phlegyas and King of the Lapithæ. He married Dia, daughter of Deioneus, and promised to make his father-in-law certain bridal presents. To avoid the fulfilment of his promise, he invited Deioneus to a banquet, and there cruelly murdered him. He was shunned by all mankind, because no one would purify him for the murder, until Zeus took pity on him, carried him to heaven, and there purified him. But he made love to Hera, and so was banished, and at the command of Zeus Mercury tied him to a wheel which would eternally revolve.

15. *All, for a purpose of hate*, etc.: there are several mythical stories told of the hatred of Zeus for the human race. In one of them he deprived the human race of fire, which was regained for them by Prometheus; in another he destroyed the race by a deluge.

28. *Sisuphos*: "the crafty," having betrayed and then

having tried to deceive Zeus, was condemned to eternal punishment in Hades, being forced forever to keep on rolling a block of stone to the top of a steep hill, only to see it roll down again. — *Tantalos:* was a favorite of the gods and allowed to share their meals; but he insulted them, and was condemned in Hades to stand immersed in water up to his chin, while over him hung delicious fruits. He suffered constant hunger and thirst; but when he opened his mouth the water dried up and the fruits vanished into the air.

36. *Heré:* same as Juno, queen of Heaven and wife of Zeus.

43. *Thessaly:* a country in the northern part of Greece.

73. *Forfeit thro' arrogance?* Pindar says of Ixion: "He found his prosperity too great to bear when with infatuate mind he became enamoured of Hera. . . . Thus his conceit drove him to an act of enormous folly, but the man soon suffered his deserts, and received an exquisite torture."

85. *Olumpos:* a mountain in Thessaly. Upon its highest peak was supposed to be the throne of Zeus, and here he summoned the assemblies of the gods. — *Erebos:* the primeval darkness, usually applied to the lower regions, which are filled with impenetrable darkness.

112. *Tartaros-doomed:* doomed to Hell.

Jochanan Hakkadosh is a story singled out from other antique memorials, by the Rabbi who is supposed to tell it, as a tradition worthy of note. It relates how once, in a Persian city, all the faithful Jews were grieving over the approaching death of a sainted scholar, and his chief disciples were clamoring to get from the one soul competent to know it the real truth about life before he left them forever. Is age content to have youth go? Is the whole of life good? they ask. He cannot assure them so. Now, he says, when he's equipped fitly to descry the truth, being wise enough to play his part triumphantly in love, or war, or verse, or statesmanship, without mistaking external for real beauty in love, and without

hghting or laboring for worthless ends, he sings the same sad song as the unwise lover, scholar, and warrior. When they had power to act, they had no wit. When they had wit to test their acts, they had no power. So, now, his wisdom but mocks him when he goes where no deeds are to be wrought. At this they resolve to try a means, permitted in some rare cases as his in whom such perfections meet, to lengthen to the fourscore years allotted man a life else to be cut off untimely at seventy-nine. Avoiding the error recorded of the cruel-kind friends of Perida, the famous teacher for whom they begged of Heaven five hundred years of weary life, the disciples of Jochanan are careful to choose from the throngs that eagerly offer pieces from their life to lengthen his, just enough to make up the year, a quarter-year each from the lives of a lover, warrior, poet, and statesman. Whereupon Jochanan at once fell asleep and woke in health. At each quarter's end his chief disciple, Tsaddik, broke in upon him to get the lesson due. When in quest of how men should love, the Rabbi's quarter-year as lover only brought the lesson that love, being suited to youth's ignorance, had grown unsatisfactory to age, which had found out all its delusions long ago. War was more promising. But when Tsaddik returned the next quarter-year to learn what was the good of battle, the Rabbi's ripe wisdom was so at odds with the impulsive force that takes the short, upsetting way to good which the slow smooth way of peace would attain as well; so uncertain what absolute good is, anyway, since a hard and fast definition is absurd, and there is good to be got from submission to evil; and so disgusted with the blundering involving of so much more than was intended in the consequences of war, which cannot hit the good aim without accomplishing evil also,— that simply loving and spending merely one's self for one's desire seemed better, as he would show the world could he but be a poet. At the third quarter's end Tsaddik, nursing hope deferred, returns to find that the Rabbi has found the coldness of age and

knowledge unfusable with the heat and hope of the poet. Reality seems better to age, which discredits the use of flying ideals in the realm of the future. Dreams cannot surpass the deeds of heroes, and to have sway as a statesman over the actual lives of men is the right field for wit and wisdom. Treasuring his last opportunity to get life's secret, Tsaddik comes at close of the fourth quarter eager to learn the management of men, how rich and poor may alike regard their inequality with indifference, and how to secure for underestimated worth the rewards poured out upon pretentiousness. But the Rabbi's superior acuteness and experience have only enabled him to appreciate the countless difficulties in directing a social course which are occasioned by the thronging lesser growths of society. Not the prominent figures the eye of youth steers by needs statesmanship look out for, but the undistinguished brutal horde whose minds are so dense that none but the poet's way to affect them seems practical, for his light their gross intelligences need not comprehend to recognize. While he says this, another happier change comes over the Rabbi, which the frustrated Tsaddik supposes to be death.

The next day, news of a persecution disperses the faithful. When Tsaddik ventures to return, three months later, he marvels to find Jochanan still lingering. Did some one of the forward boys and girls in the crowd, whose clamor to lend the Rabbi pieces of their green lives had been contemptuously repulsed, somehow manage to put fresh breath in him? For the aged scholar is now thrilling with good cheer, his wise brain suffused with the freshness of a child's heart. In his eyes, all opposites are reconciled and fulfilled without nullification of any; for ignorance is now in him confirmed by knowledge. Good and evil, ideal and real, are no longer set at war with one another in the exacting, dissatisfying attempt to secure a prescribed net result; and life no longer seen brokenly, but whole from first to last, is perceived within the soul — and not outside in any material

accomplishment by means of which it learns — to be all good, a source of never-ending ecstasy. He dies, yearning to impart the secret of his rapture to Tsaddik, on whom it is wasted; for he thinks he knows just how to account for it, and sees in it only an example of a curious passage in an old Hebrew writer, describing how the *Ruach*, or imparted spirit, may stay awhile in the bodies of great saints and while almost loosed from the dead flesh, and, neither earthly nor divine as yet, get a foretaste of heaven. So, too learned to apply Jochanan's words to this life, Tsaddik buries his body and bids his spirit depart hence.

2. *Mishna:* part of the Jewish Talmud, containing the laws and instances of them collected from the decisions and records of ancient Rabbis. The word means doctrine. — *The Jew aforesaid:* named in the title of the poem, who was the reputed author or transcriber of the Mishna. This Rabbi Yehudah, or Judah Hannasi (the Prince), born before 140, was called "Hakkadosh," or holy, and also, like the Rabbi of whom he tells, "Jochanan," or John. In a letter to Dr. Furnivall, April 10, 1883, Browning writes: "I got an American paper, last night, wherein there is repeated that Jochanan revived by 'a transfusion of blood.' There is not a word about such a thing; on the contrary, the account in the poem makes it impossible. How could the 'transfusion' bring experiences with it? or how could the boy's gift, 'which he threw and it stuck,' be taken in that manner? This comes of the critics reading attentively the criticisms of their brethren, and paying no attention at all to the text criticised. The writer of the article in *The Times* made the mistake first, and even the *Academy* article must needs follow him. The whole story is a fiction of my own, with just this foundation, — that the old Rabbins fancied that *earnest wishing* might add to a valued life."

5. *Schiphaz:* or Shiraz, see line 801.

12. *Eximious:* elect, from the Latin, *eximius*, picked

out from the mass of men. — *Jochanan Ben Sabbathai*: unhistorical. Mary M. Cohen in the *Jewish Messenger*, March 4, 1887, says: "Browning does not here portray any individual man, but takes the names and characteristics of several rabbis, fusing all into a whole." That he had the idea of making his revelation typical of Jewish enlightenment is indicated in his intention, according to Joseph Jacobs in the *Jewish Quarterly*, to call the poem "Hakkadosh Jochanan," equivalent to "Saint John," as if this Saint Jochanan represented the spiritual essence of Judaism as Saint John that of Christianity. Mr. Jacobs having pointed out, through a friend, the incorrectness of putting the adjective "holy" or "sainted" and the name in this order, the poet altered it.

49. *More luckless than stood David*, etc.: 1 Samuel xvii. 38–40.

60. *Moses' stick:* see Browning's own note, at the end of the poem, wherein he gives some specimens of the kind of writings contained in this Rabbinical treatise, but which is assumed here to contain, also, sharp moral lessons.

88. *Khubbezleh:* imaginary.

120. *Targums:* Chaldean paraphrases of the Old Testament, mixed with interpretations and illustrations.

122. *The Nine Points of Perfection:* nine, being a trine of the Trinity, was a mystical number; the antique ideas of it as the consummate figure Dante reflects in "Vita Nuova," ii., and in the structure of the "Divine Comedy," see also its close. Perfection is expounded in the Mishna tract, "Pirke Aboth," 5, according to Professor Toy, cited by Mr. Cooke.

143. *That apt olive-branch Tsaddik:* the olive was the emblem of wisdom and peace, of which Tsaddik was a likely offshoot. His name means "just." He is not historical.

148. *From Job down to Satam:* a dynasty of Jewish elders.

150. *Dob:* meaning "Bear," as the poet says, referring

to the constellation known in English as the Great Bear, and also as *aisch* or *na'sh*, the bier, in Hebrew.

154. *Banoth:* meaning "daughters" in Hebrew, referring to the three stars in the handle of the dipper in the constellation of the Bear.

156. *The East-cone:* the Pole-star about which the constellation of the Bear seems to revolve without setting like the constellations elsewhere in the heavens; and so, says Tsaddik, they may postpone the setting of the dying man by making his bier revolve about the fixed centre, the place of peace.

160. *Salem:* the Hebrew word meaning "peace," as in Jeru-salem, the city of Peace, and the symbol of a more mystical place of Peace, the New Jerusalem of holy souls of which the Jew dreams.

168. *Those Old Just Ones:* ten Jewish martyrs who suffered persecution under the Emperor Hadrian.

175. *Akiba:* a Rabbi of the second century, who was one of these ten martyrs, and, according to the Mishna, suffered death under the iron comb, as the poem tells, while repeating the "Shema," declaring God's unity.

177. *Jischab:* Prof. C. H. Toy, cited by Mr. Cooke, says that Jischab does not appear in the list of martyrs given in the Talmud ("Gemara," tract "Aboda Zara"), but Joshobeb, who is given there, may be meant for Jischab, as in Hebrew the names differ but by one consonant, — רשבב and רשחב.

186. *Selah:* the word often appearing between Psalms (*e. g.* Psalm lxvii.), and over whose original meaning scholars have spent research and conjecture in vain. It was used, possibly, for *forte*, louder, or in antiphonal or responsive singing, as a sort of a musical cue to indicate, when one choir or chorister had finished, that the other might begin.

188. *Plant our lion-flag once more on Zion's mount:* the standard of the lion of the tribe of Judah on Mount Zion, on which Jerusalem was built, which David first took from the Jebusites (see 2 Samuel v. 6-9). Zion means in Hebrew "sunny"

210. *The appointed Fourscore:* Psalm xc. 10.

215. *Perida:* the story here told is so recorded in the Talmud, except that the repetition of the lesson to the stupid pupil is four hundred times, when a voice from on high (or a Bathkol, literally, "daughter of the voice") proclaimed that four hundred years should be added to Perida's life.

221. *Uzzean:* an adjective formed from Uz, where Job, the ensample of all patience, lived.

231. *Nil:* Latin for "nothing."

256. *Rudesby:* a rude boy, an obsolete word, formed from *rude* and *boy*. "Twelfth Night," iv. 1, 55.

354. *Sycamine:* a variety of fig-tree.

396. *Djinn:* the Arabic word for a "genie," a gnome.

413. *Edom's children:* the Gentiles, or the children of Rome, in Jewish speech; that is to say, the Christians.

414. *Sic Jesus vult:* so Jesus bids. Matthew v. 36.

474. *Joshua-like*, etc.: Joshua x. 12, 13.

539. *Samsons* (Judges xiv.–xvi.), *Abners* (2 Samuel ii., iii.), *Joabs* (1 Samuel xxvi. 6), *Judases:* captains and leaders, like the preceding, of the name of Judah, of whom there are a number in the Jewish scriptures, from Judah, son of Jacob (Genesis xliii. 3), to the Juda of Ezra (iii. 9).

560. *Ahithophel:* meaning "brother of folly," the conspirator with Absalom against King David. 2 Samuel xv. 31.

578. *Sons of Shimei:* 2 Samuel xvi. 5–8.

585. *Alkahest:* the universal solvent sought by Paracelsus and all alchemists.

612. *Mizraim:* a name for Egypt, derived from Mizraim, son of Ham.

613. *Goshen:* the district in Egypt settled by the Israelites. Genesis xlv. 10.

670. *Shushan:* the Hebrew word for lily.

721. *Tohu-bohu:* without form and void. Genesis i. 2.

759. *A rape . . . on air:* the myth of Ixion, who, meaning to embrace Heré, embraced instead, by the craft of Zeus, a cloud shaped like her.